



Late Sunday evening...

I STILL DON'T
GET WHY SAM RAN
AWAY YESTERDAY!

IT'S POSSIBLE,
EVEN LIKELY, SAM
DOESN'T LIKE ME,
BUT ENOUGH TO
RUN?

IT'S NOT LIKE HE
HAD A PROBLEM BEING
AT THE COMIC SHOP
WITH ME THERE.

HE DIDN'T
USED TO,
ANYWAY.
MAYBE I'M
THE REASON
HE WASN'T
THERE ON
FRIDAY?

IS HE
JUST
AFRAID
I'LL TALK
TO HIM?

IF HE KNOWS
SARAH AND I ARE
FRIENDS, AND HE'S
WORRIED I'LL TELL
SARAH HE'S TRANS,
WHY WOULD WE
ALL HAVE TO BE AT
THE SHOP AT THE
SAME TIME FOR
THAT TO HAPPEN?

DOES HE
THINK I DON'T
KNOW THEY'RE
"NOT-DATING",
AND DOESN'T
WANT ME TO
FIND OUT?

THIS WOULD
BE SO MUCH
SIMPLER IF I
COULD TALK TO
SARAH ABOUT
IT, BUT IT
WOULD RAISE
TOO MANY
QUESTIONS!

I'D BE
BREAKING
MY PROMISE
TO SAM!

IF THIS IS
KEEPING SAM
FROM PLAYING IN
TOURNAMENTS,
AND STRESSING
HIM OUT ENOUGH
TO RUN AWAY, I
REALLY SHOULD
TALK TO HIM.

BUT I CAN'T
ASK SARAH FOR
HIS CELL PHONE
NUMBER WITHOUT
TELLING HER WHY.
AND IF HE'S
AVOIDING ME AT
THE COMIC SHOP,
HOW DO I...

WAIT... THE SHOP!

THAT'S HOW
I CAN GET
HIS PHONE
NUMBER!

Monday, early evening...

HEY GORDON, UM... I
THINK I MIGHT'VE LEFT SOME-
THING IN THE BACK...?

GO AHEAD,
BUDDY!

OKAY, SO I JUST
LIED TO GORDON, THE MOST
INNOCENT AND FRIENDLY OF
ALL COMIC SHOP CLERKS...

...AND I'M ABOUT TO
LOOK AT INFORMATION
SAM GAVE US FOR
RESERVING COMICS...

...BUT SAM MIGHT
BE MISSING OUT
ON TOURNAMENTS
BECAUSE OF ME, AND
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY
I CAN THINK OF TO
GET HIS NUMBER
WITHOUT BETRAYING
HIS TRUST!

WITHOUT BETRAYING
HIS TRUST? HE TRUSTED
THE STORE WITH HIS
NUMBER, NOT ME!

YES, BUT NOW
HE'S AVOIDING
THE STORE
BECAUSE OF ME.
I'VE HURT HIM. I
NEED TO MAKE
THINGS OKAY!

I DON'T
KNOW THAT
FOR CERTAIN.

AFTER WHAT
HAPPENED AT
THE MALL? HE
DIDN'T JUST
WALK AWAY.
HE RAN. FAST.

JUSTIN GOT
ME THIS JOB. HE
WOULDN'T WANT
ME ABUSING MY
POSITION HERE.

BUT I CAN'T ASK
JUSTIN IF HE'D BE
OKAY WITH THIS.
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T
BEEN ABLE TO
TALK TO ANYONE
ABOUT THIS!

"YOUR POWER IS
BEING THERE FOR
PEOPLE WHEN THEY
NEED YOU."

SAM DOESN'T NEED ME.

THIS IS
WRONG.



IF SAM WAS IN TROUBLE, MAYBE I COULD JUSTIFY THIS, BUT...

I DON'T EVEN REALLY KNOW IF HE'S AVOIDING THE COMIC SHOP BECAUSE OF ME, AND IF HE IS...

...THAT'S HIS CHOICE, ISN'T IT?

I WANT TO TALK TO HIM, AND MAKE PEACE WITH HIM IF HE REALLY IS AVOIDING ME...

...BUT I'M ONLY IN THIS SITUATION BECAUSE I'VE ALREADY ACCIDENTALLY VIOLATED HIS PRIVACY ONCE.

I'M NOT GOING TO FIX THINGS BY VIOLATING IT ON PURPOSE.

THE RIGHT THING TO DO IS TO LEAVE SAM ALONE.

HEY, SAM!

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!

NO! JUST STAY BACK HERE! MIND OWN BUSINESS! IF HE ACTUALLY WANTS TO TALK TO YOU, HE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE EVERY FRIDAY!

HEY, ANY OF MY RESERVED COMICS IN?

I'LL CHECK!

COOL. THANK YOU.

GASP.

WHAT DO?

DANGER!

FAUSTIAN BARGAINS!

PRIVACY!

QUESTIONS I MIGHT BE ABLE TO ANSWER FOR HIM IF SO!

BUT PRIVACY!

ACTUAL DANGER, GRACE.

DAMMIT.

ANTENNAE OUT FOR
MAXIMUM GOODNESS WITH
FACES AND FIGURES...



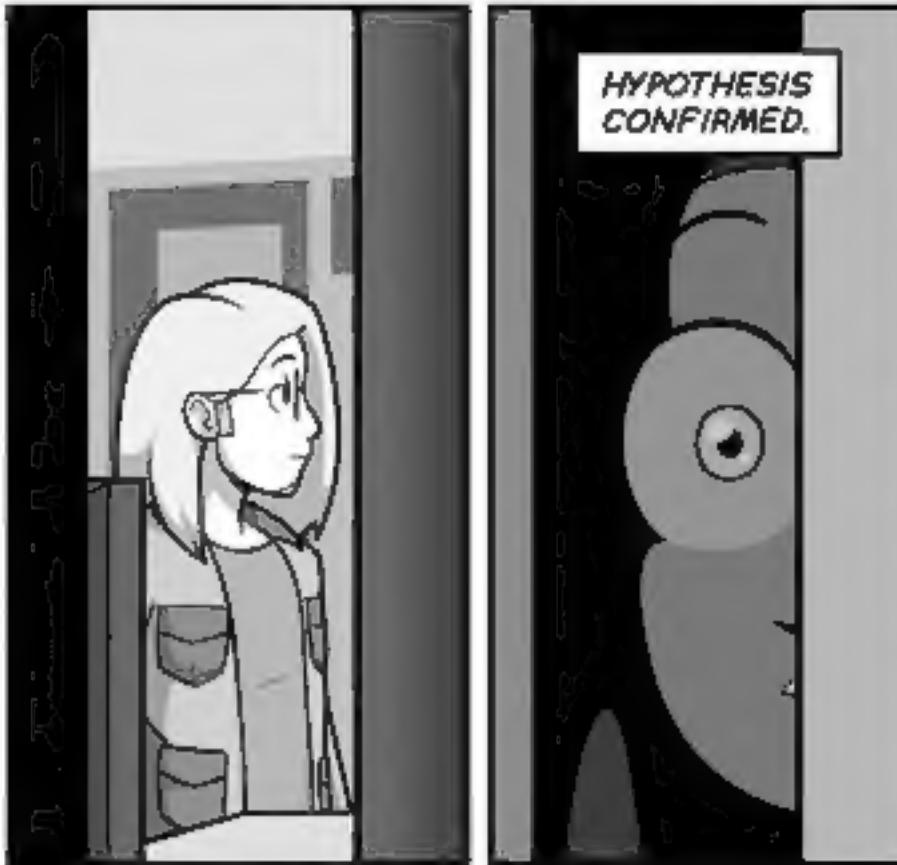
LIGHTS OUT...



TESTING HYPOTHESIS...



HYPOTHESIS
CONFIRMED.



SAM!

I'M REALLY SORRY TO
BOther you but there's
something I have to
talk to you about!



SOMEONE'S GIVEN
YOU A MAGIC MARK.
HAVEN'T THEY?



YOU KNOW ABOUT MAGIC MARKS?

YEAH.

DO... DO YOU HAVE ONE?

UH...

GRACE, KNOWING YOUR LUCK, A TIME WILL COME WHEN YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR ABILITIES IN FRONT OF SOMEONE WHO ISN'T ALREADY AWARE OF THEM.

AGAIN.

URYUOMS ARE A BETTER KEPT SECRET THAN MAGIC... ESPECIALLY THESE DAYS...

I DON'T HAVE A MARK, BUT I WAS BORN WITH MAGIC ABILITIES, AND I'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MAGIC-RELATED STUFF BECAUSE OF THAT.

AND ONE THING I'VE LEARNED IS THAT MAGIC MARKS ARE GIVEN TO PEOPLE BY IMMORTALS OF VARYING GOODNESS.

...AND ARE BEST KEPT SECRET, SO... IF YOU MUST EXPLAIN YOUR ABILITIES TO SOMEONE ELSE, BEND THE TRUTH A BIT BY SAYING...

YOU MEAN THOSE ELF-LIKE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE WHEN CHEERLEADRA FOUGHT THAT GRIFFIN?

WHAT? OH, RIGHT! THAT HAPPENED!

YES, THEM. I'M BOTHERING YOU BECAUSE I WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT INDEBTED TO THAT JERK WHO MANIPULATED THE GRIFFIN.

I DON'T THINK... UM, CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS SOMEWHERE AWAY FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE SHOP?

OH! YEAH, UM... YEAH.

OR, I GUESS, SOMEONE LIKE HIM, BUT MOSTLY HIM.

GOOD IDEA.

I'M GUESSING YOU NOTICED WHEN I RAN AWAY AT THE MALL.

AND WEREN'T AT THE TOURNAMENT LAST FRIDAY, WHICH DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A BIG DEAL BEFORE THE MALL.

I'VE BEEN LEARNING MAKEUP AND COSTUMES FOR PLAYS, AND LATER COSPLAY, SINCE FIRST GRADE. I'VE GOTTEN PRETTY GOOD AT IT, BUT YOU WERE ABLE TO TELL... MY "SITUATION" MONTHS AGO...

...AND YOU KNEW I'D BE ABLE TO TELL YOU'RE TRANSFORMED.

YEAH, WELL, THAT'S WHY I RAN AT THE MALL WITH THE TOURNAMENT. I WANTED TO GIVE EVERYONE A FEW WEEKS TO MAKE IT LESS LIKELY THEY'D NOTICE.

BETWEEN YOU AND GEORGE? THAT LAST TOURNAMENT WAS JUST A NO-GO.

ANYWAY, I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHO GAVE ME THE MAGIC MARK. THEY LEFT THEIR NAME IN A NOTE, BUT...

A NOTE?

YEAH, WHEN I WOKE UP TWO FRIDAYS AGO, THERE WAS A NOTE BY MY BED.

"SAM, YOU DO NOT KNOW ME, BUT I HAVE GIVEN YOU A MAGIC MARK. IT IS HIDDEN BEHIND THE HAIR ON THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD."

"THIS MARK ALLOWS YOU TO TRANSFORM INTO YOUR TRUE SELF AND BACK AT WILL. THIS MIGHT FEEL HARDER TO DO IN A WEEK OR TWO, BUT YOU WILL STILL BE ABLE TO DO IT."

I DON'T CARRY IT AROUND WITH ME, BUT I TOOK A PICTURE OF IT...

"I ASK NOTHING IN RETURN FOR THIS, AND ONLY LEAVE THIS NOTE SO YOUR FIRST TRANSFORMATION WON'T BE BY ACCIDENT."

"SINCERELY,
PANDORA."

I-I'VE NEVER MET PANDORA MYSELF, BUT I KNOW OF HER. IT'S GOOD THAT IT WAS HER.

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT A "DEAL WITH THE DEVIL" SORT OF SITUATION WITH THAT WEIRDLY WHITE IMMORTAL WHO ACTUALLY REMINDS ME OF SATAN, BUT PANDORA?

SHE'S FINE, IT'S FINE



ARE YOU SURE? THAT LOOK ON YOUR FACE WAS...

I WAS SURPRISED! PANDORA, SHE... SHE'S NOT PERFECT, BUT...

...SHE'S GOT SOFT SPOTS FOR THINGS! A-AND PEOPLE SHE CARES ABOUT, AND...



...PEOPLE WHO... CARE ABOUT HER, AND... SHE LEFT YOU THAT NOTE... SHE...

...SHE REALLY WAS TRYING TO DO SOMETHING NICE, SO YOU'RE FINE!

I-IT'S ALL...

IT'S FINE!



TWO FRIDAYS AGO.

THE MORNING AFTER
PANDORA TOLD SARAH SHE
WAS A GOOD FRIEND...

...AND THE MORNING AFTER
SHE SPOKE TO TEDD!

...PANDORA GAVE TEDD AND
SARAH MAGIC AT THE SAME
TOURNAMENT WHERE SARAH
MADE PLANS WITH SAM. SHE
KNEW ABOUT THE DATE!

PANDORA COULD HAVE
MARKED SAM THEN, AND
DECIDED TO GIVE HIM
THE NOTE LATER AFTER
SEEING SARAH OR TEDD...

...BUT SHE PUT SAM'S MARK
WHERE IT'S EFFECTIVELY
INVISIBLE, JUST LIKE SHE DID
WITH TEDD! SHE WOULDN'T
DO THAT AND THEN WAIT A
WEEK TO LEAVE A NOTE!

SHE MUST HAVE
GIVEN SAM THE
MARK THE SAME
MORNING SHE
LEFT THE NOTE!

IS THE WHOLE
REASON SHE
MARKED SAM
BECAUSE SARAH
WAS GOING ON A
DATE WITH HIM?

OR BECAUSE
SHE THOUGHT
TEDD WOULD
WANT HER TO?

A BIT OF BOTH?

I'M GUESSING YOU
RECOGNIZE THE NAME?

UH...

IT DOESN'T SOUND
LIKE IT'S FINE!

YOU'RE
FINE! YOU
REALLY ARE
FINE!

THAT'S
NOT WHY
I'M...

SHE'S
GONE.

PANDORA'S
GONE.

"GONE"?

SHE'LL BE BACK,
BUT... DIFFERENT. I
DON'T KNOW HOW
DIFFERENT, BUT...

SHE SACRIFICED WHO SHE WAS TO STOP THE
MONSTERS AT THE MALL TWO FRIDAYS AGO.
AND MONSTERS ALL OVER THE WORLD, TOO.

SHE'S WHERE
ALL THOSE LIGHTS
IN THE SKY CAME
FROM.

S-SORRY
TO SCARE
YOU, I
JUST...

A-ANYWAY,
THAT'S WHY
I MADE
THAT FACE.

HUG



NOT AFTER MONTHS OF YOU NOT SAYING ANYTHING ABOUT IT, OR TREATING ME ANY DIFFERENTLY, AND ESPECIALLY NOT GIVEN YOUR SUPER SHELTERED UPBRINGING!

I WANTED TO KNOW HOW WORRIED I SHOULD BE ABOUT YOU KNOWING, SO I SORT OF ASKED AROUND THE SHOP ABOUT YOU

I'M GOING TO GO HIDE MY FACE FOREVER NOW

HEY, NOBODY WOULD JUST GUESS THERE'D BEEN A WORLD WAR WITHOUT BEING TOLD FIRST LET ALONE TWO!

I KNOW, BUT IT'S STILL SO EMBARRASSING.

I'M SORRY I ASKED AROUND

NO DON'T BE! IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU DID! I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DID!



THANK YOU, BUT... SEEING AS YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT ANYWAY, AND ABOUT MY MARK...

CAN I TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOME STUFF RELATED TO... THAT?

ME? WHY ME?

I MEAN, I GET ME FOR THE MARK, BUT THAT?



WELL, ASIDE FROM SEEMING LIKE A NICE PERSON...

I HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE I'M TRANS. YOU ARE LITERALLY THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WHO KNOWS. AND I HAVE BEEN DESPERATE FOR SOMEONE TO TALK TO

I THINK I KNOW THAT FEELING



SO YOU
REALLY
HAVEN'T
TOLD
ANYONE?

I HAVEN'T
REALLY BEEN
EAGER TO COME
OUT AGAIN.

RIGHT, RIGHT

WAIT, WHAT?

"AGAIN"?

YEAH.. SEE I ALWAYS KNEW
I LIKED GIRLS AND I USED
TO... HAVE MISCONCEPTIONS
ABOUT LESBIANS.

I THOUGHT...

"YEAH, I'M MASCULINE.
I'M GAY THAT'S HOW
LESBIANS WORK? DUH."

SO A FEW
YEARS AGO,
I CAME
OUT AS A
LESBIAN.

SOME PEOPLE
WERE COOL
WITH IT, IT...
TOOK TIME FOR
OTHERS, AND
THE REST

IT WAS A LOT
TO GO THROUGH.

AND THEN...
I MENTIONED
EXPERIENCE WITH
PLAYS AND
COSPLAY?

I STARTED TO
REALIZE THERE WAS
PROBABLY A REASON I
ONLY WANTED TO PLAY
GUY CHARACTERS

AFTER EVERYTHING I WENT
THROUGH THE FIRST TIME, I
HAVEN'T BEEN EAGER TO SAY
"HEY, GUESS WHAT? I GOT IT
WRONG THE FIRST TIME!"

"I HOPE
YOU'RE ALL
OKAY WITH
THIS!"

IF THEY ACCEPTED YOU AS A LESBIAN, SHOULDN'T THEY ACCEPT

THAT DOESN'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING.

A LOT OF PEOPLE SEEM GREAT UNTIL THE WRONG SUBJECT COMES UP

THERE'S ALSO PEOPLE IN MY LIFE WHO'D JUST LOVE TO HEAR ME SAY I WAS WRONG ABOUT BEING A LESBIAN, AND... DISMISS WHAT I'VE REALIZED SINCE THEN.

WHAT I'D REALLY LIKE? NEVER COMING OUT TO ANYONE

JUST BEING A MAN WITHOUT EVER HAVING TO EXPLAIN OR JUSTIFY WHO I AM TO ANYONE

I WANT PEOPLE TO SEE ME AS I AM AND JUST BE COOL WITH IT

NO QUESTIONS, NO JUDGEMENT

NO ASKING FOR ANYONE'S ACCEPTANCE

UH...

I'M SO SORRY ABOUT WHEN WE FIRST MET!

IT'S OKAY! REALLY!

O-KAY...

SORRY

B-BUT THERE'S
NO REAL GETTING
AROUND COMING
OUT AGAIN.

NOT UNLESS I
WANT TO HIDE
WHO I AM IN
SOME WAY OR
ANOTHER
FOREVER.

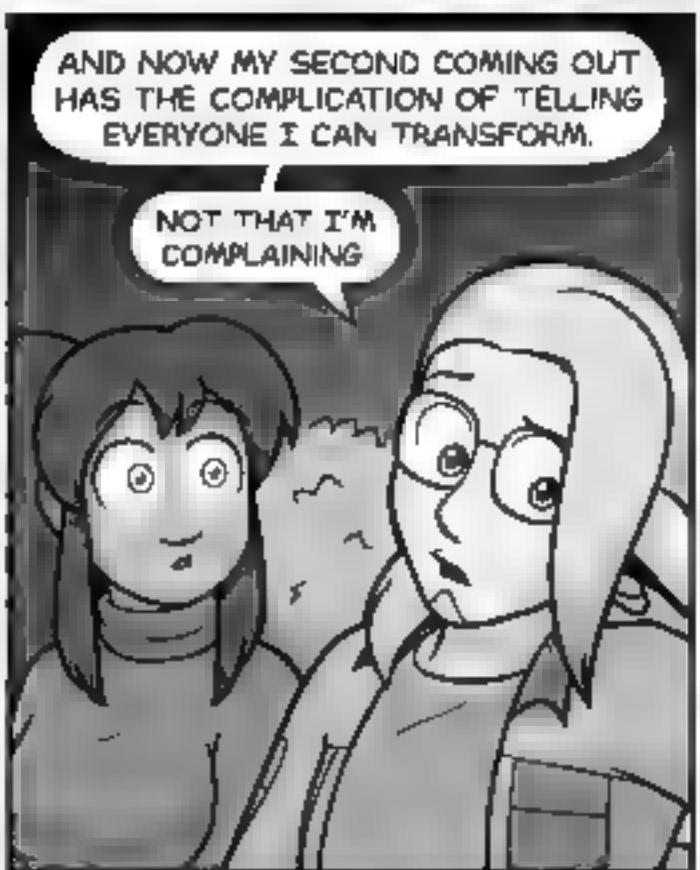


AND NOW MY SECOND COMING OUT
HAS THE COMPLICATION OF TELLING
EVERYONE I CAN TRANSFORM.

NOT THAT I'M
COMPLAINING

YOU'RE GOING
TO TELL PEOPLE
ABOUT THAT?

I'M NOT GOING TO
NOT USE THIS MAGIC



BUT YOU'RE
NOT PLANNING
TO DO IT ANY
TIME SOON.

HECK NO. I AM IN
NO HURRY. IT JUST
FEELS INEVITABLE.

AND MAYBE IT'S SELFISH,
BUT I'D RATHER NOT BE
THE FIRST PERSON
WHOSE COMING OUT
INCLUDES LITERAL MAGIC.

SORT OF HOPING
SOMEONE BEATS
ME TO THAT



WHICH.. BRINGS US TO
SARAH... YOU'RE FRIENDS
WITH HER RIGHT?

SHE'S SUPER IMPORTANT AND
WONDERFUL TO ME AND I
WISH SHE LIVED WITH TEDD
AND ME AND ALSO ELLEN AND
WE'D ALL SLEEP ON A GIANT
BEAN BAG TOGETHER AND
CONSTANTLY INVITE FRIENDS
OVER FOR SLUMBER PARTIES.

DOES SHE.. I DON'T KNOW IF
I'M CROSSING A LINE, HERE BUT
DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT MAGIC?

UH OH. IS THAT CROSSING A
LINE? I DON'T KNOW UNDER
THE CIRCUMSTANCES.. SHE'D
PROBABLY WANT ME TO. ?

SHE KNOWS
ABOUT ME,
SO YES.

SO SHE WOULDN'T
BE TOO FREAKED OUT BY MY
BEING ABLE TO TRANSFORM.

JUST LIMIT IT TO
WHAT SAM WOULD
REASONABLY GUESS.

I WANT TO SAY
"MILD SURPRISE"?
I'M SURE SHE'D BE
OKAY WITH IT

SO IT MIGHT
NOT BE A
DISASTER IF I
TOLD HER

THOUGH I REALLY
DON'T WANT TO.

I LIKE HANGING OUT WITH HER. SHE'S FUN, AND I FEEL LIKE I CAN BE MYSELF AROUND HER.

BUT LIKE I'VE BEEN SAYING, I DON'T REALLY WANT TO HAVE TO COME OUT TO ANYONE

I'D FEEL OBLIGATED TO TELL HER IF WE WERE IN A RELATIONSHIP.

...BUT I'M NOT SURE I'M EVEN READY TO DATE, OR IF SHE'S WHO I'D WANT TO DATE



SARAH IS A LOVELY GIRL.

YES, SHE IS, BUT... I LIKE THINGS PLATONIC BETWEEN US.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'M JUST NOT READY FOR DATING, OR IF I'D ALWAYS JUST WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH HER, BUT THAT'S HOW I FEEL RIGHT NOW

I'M WORRIED SHE DOESN'T SEE THINGS THAT WAY, THOUGH.



AS SARAH'S FRIEND, I CANNOT D.VULGE ANYTHING SHE HAS PRIVATELY SHARED REGARDING HER FEELINGS ABOUT YOU

HOWEVER, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF YOUR FEELINGS WITH HER.



I WAS AFRAID OF THAT .

YOU KNOW, I ALMOST CANCELED OUR FIRST "MAYBE DATE" WHEN I FOUND OUT I COULD TRANSFORM?

YOU DID? WHY?

BECAUSE I JUST FOUND OUT I COULD TRANSFORM!

AND SOME MAGIC PERSON HAD BROKEN INTO MY ROOM AND DONE SOMETHING TO ME!

AND I WASN'T SURE THE DATE WAS A GOOD IDEA TO BEGIN WITH!

I WAS FREAKING OUT IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS!

YOU CAN TRANSFORM?!

I LOVE TRANSFORMATION MAGIC!

SHOW ME, WON'T YOU?

STAY BEHIND ME!

THANK YOU, BUT
TRUST ME ON THIS.

OOH! A STRONG
GIRL? COOL! HI!

OOH, A
NAME. UM

CALL ME SMOKE?

THEIR VOICE
SEEMS TO SHIFT
IN PITCH...

UH, HI.
WHO ARE
YOU?

HMPH. IT'S NOT VERY GOOD
BUT IT'LL DO FOR NOW

ANYWAY, SORRY! DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE
BUT I WAS JUST SMOKING ALONG WHEN I
OVERHEARD YOUR FRIEND THERE SAID HE CAN
TRANSFORM. AND I'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE IT

I-IT'S REALLY
NOT ANYTHING
INTERESTING...

PLEASE TELL ME
IT'S A WEREWOLF
SORT OF THING!

WELL NOW

THAT'S
SUBJECTIVE
ISN'T IT?

STAY CALM, OKAY? SMOKE.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO SEE
MY FRIEND TRANSFORM?

TRANSFORMATIONS
ARE COOL.

WELL, HE
DOESN'T WANT
TO TRANSFORM,
BUT I DON'T
MIND.

WHAT IF I
TRANSFORM
INSTEAD?

ARE THEY
SCRATCHING
SMOKE???

YOU CAN
TRANSFORM.
TOO!?

YES, AND MINE IS A WEREWOLF
SORTA THING! KIND OF WILL
YOU LEAVE US ALONE, THEN?

HMPH. RUDE
GIRL, MUCH?
BUT I GUESS
HANGING OUT
WAS OUT
OF THE
QUESTION

OKAY
SURE

ARE YOU SURE
ABOUT THIS?

DON'T WORRY! IT'S
NOT A PROBLEM!

THEY JUST
WANT TO SEE A
LITTLE TRANS-
FORMATION



OH, GEE IF
ONLY IT WAS
POSSIBLE TO
TRANSFORM
OH WAIT

EITHER THAT
CHICK IS CHEER-
LEADRA HERSELF
OR SHE'S ANOTHER
SUPER CHICK.

YOU SOUND
LIKE YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT
SUPER POWERED
CHICKENS.

Meanwhile, literal miles away and entirely oblivious to Grace and Sam's situation, Camdin enjoys a sandwich...



and Smoke floats bewildered by what they've just witnessed



IF BEING PART ALIEN IS A
BIGGER DEAL THAN MAGIC

...DID I JUST
LET THE FATTEST CAT
OUT OF THE BAG?

ARE YOU OKAY?

UH...
YEAH...

I DON'T THINK ANYONE'S
AROUND, AND WE CAN'T
BE EASILY SEEN FROM A
DISTANCE HERE... SO...

BACK TO
NORMAL!

WELL ONE
DEFINITION OF
NORMAL

WAS THAT...
A HUMAN?

I THINK
SO, YES.

BUT... SMOKE... I
MEAN... WHERE'S
YOUR BRAIN WHEN
YOU'RE SMOKE?

IT'S BEST NOT
TO DWELL TOO
MUCH ON THAT
SORT OF THING



ANYWAY, THERE ARE PEOPLE
WHO CAN LEARN OTHER PEOPLE'S
SPELLS BY OBSERVING THEM...

WAIT, SO...
THEY CAN DO WHAT
YOU DID NOW?

NO. UH... NOT ALL SPELLS CAN
BE COPIED, AND I'M WEIRD IN THAT
NONE OF MINE CAN BE COPIED

WIZARDS.

AND I THINK THEY'RE ONE OF
THEM. THAT'S WHY THEY WANTED
TO SEE YOU TRANSFORM.

I DON'T THINK THEY
KNEW THAT, AND NOT
BEING ABLE TO COPY
ME SCARED THEM.

WHICH IS
TRUE TEDD'S
SAID SOME
SPELLS CAN'T
BE COPIED.

IF MY TRANS-
FORMATION
LOOK THE SAME
TO A WIZARD AS
THOSE SPELLS,
MAYBE THAT FAT
CAT ISN'T OUT
OF THE BAG!

IF THAT'S THE
CASE, SMOKE'S
REACTION COULD
MEAN THEY'RE
SELF-TRAINED...

WELL, HELL THEY
SHOULD'VE JUST
BEEN UP FRONT ABOUT
WHAT THEY WANTED.

I'D GIVE
EVERYONE
THIS SPELL IF
I COULD



HEY, UM... I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL BE AT THE NEXT TOURNAMENT I MIGHT BE, BUT I WANT TO GIVE IT ENOUGH TIME THAT EVERYONE WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO REALIZE MY CHANGE, AND, UM...

WOULD IT BE ALRIGHT IF WE MAYBE TALKED AGAIN ABOUT... STUFF, IN THE MEANTIME?

UM... SURE I'LL GIVE YOU MY NUMBER.

COOL COOL THANKS.

LISTEN, UM...

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO COME OUT AGAIN YET, AND I'M NOT TRYING TO PUSH YOU IN TO ANYTHING...

BUT I FEEL LIKE I WOULD BE A JERK TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IF I DIDN'T SAY SARAH'S KEPT MY SECRETS, AND INSTANTLY ACCEPTED ME FOR ALL MY SOMETIMES FUZZINESS.

SHE IS AWESOME AND I LOVE HER

IF YOU EVER DECIDE YOU DO WANT TO TELL HER, I'M SURE IT WOULD GO WELL.

ALSO SHE'S COOL WITH TEDD BEING GENDER FLUID AND HAS BEEN MALE HERSELF MULTIPLE TIMES AND THERE WAS MY BIRTHDAY PARTY AND SHE'S FRIENDS WITH ELLEN WHO WAS CREATED AS A FEMALE DUPLICATE OF ELLIOT AND I BET YOU AND TEDD COULD BE FRIENDS TOO AND SO MANY ENCOURAGING THINGS I COULD SAY IF THEY WEREN'T SECRETS...

I'LL... KEEP THAT IN MIND.

OKAY I WON'T SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT

AAAAAA IT WOULD GO SO WELL

YOU'D GIVE EVERYONE YOUR SPELL?

YEAH, WHY NOT? NOT EVERYONE WOULD USE IT, SURE. BUT EVEN BEYOND HELPING ANYONE WHO'S TRANS, IT'D HELP GIVE PEOPLE A WIDER PERSPECTIVE OF THINGS

AND MAYBE MAKE PARTIES MORE INTERESTING, BUT MOSTLY THE ALTRUISTIC STUFF



WHO? LIKE... A MAGIC POLICE?

SORT OF? I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T ELABORATE.

ARE THEY THE SORT WHO MIGHT GET MAD IF WORD SPREAD ABOUT SOMEONE WHO CAN MAGICALLY TRANSFORM?

LESS THAN IN THE PAST, BUT PROBABLY A LITTLE, STILL?

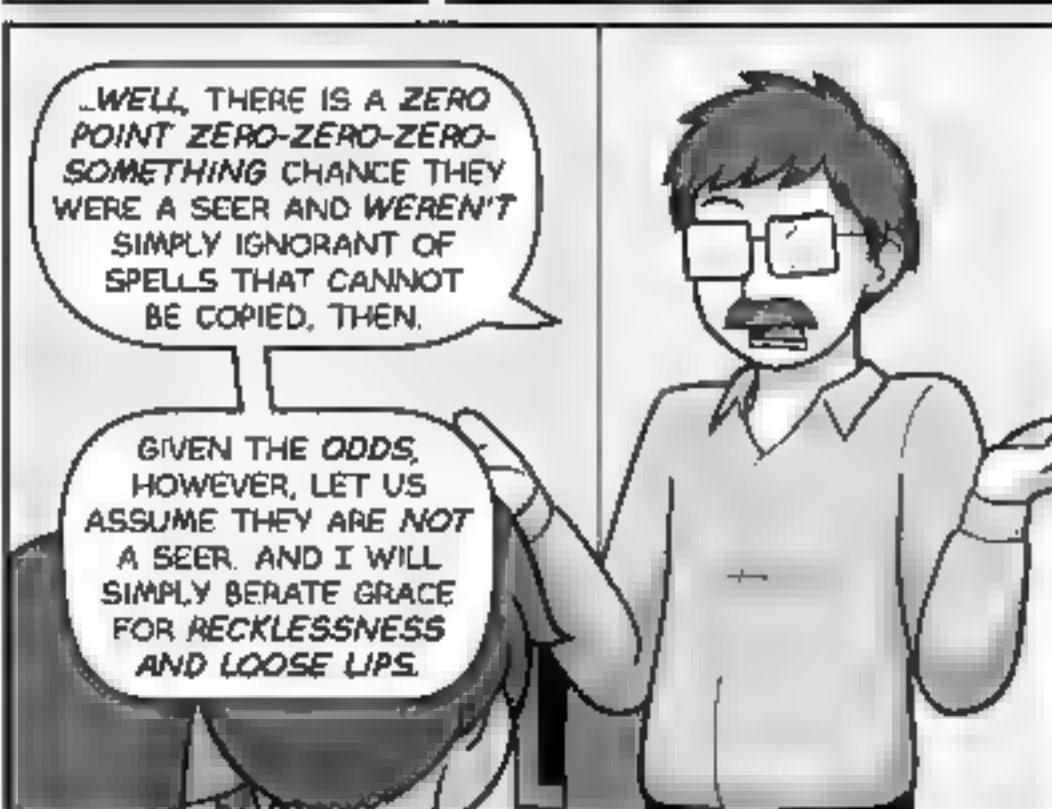


I REALLY HOPE I'M NOT THE FIRST PERSON WHOSE COMING OUT INCLUDES LITERAL MAGIC

SO IN SUMMARY YOU WERE, SOMEHOW, ABLE TO TELL THAT SOMEONE, WHO YOU WILL NOT SPECIFY WAS TRANSFORMED

YOU APPROACHED THEM ABOUT THIS DUE TO CONCERN OF "FAUSTIAN BARGAINS", REVEALED THAT YOU YOURSELF USE MAGIC AND WENT TO TALK SOMEWHERE ABOUT "STUFF" BY THE RIVER WALK

THEN A WIZARD MADE OF SMOKE WANTED TO SEE THEM TRANSFORM. YOU TRANSFORMED INSTEAD TO INTIMIDATE THEM, SCARING THE WIZARD OFF, AND REVEALING YOUR THREE TAILED FORM TO THIS FRIEND OF YOURS.



SO I GUESS
I HELPED SAM?

HE HAS SOMEONE TO
TALK TO ABOUT THIS
STUFF NOW AT LEAST
AND I CAN SORTA GET
WHY HE'D RATHER IT
BE ME THAN SARAH.

HE WANTS TO
JUST BE HIMSELF
AND NOT HAVE
TO JUSTIFY WHO
HE IS WITH HER.

I JUST HOPE IF
HE DOES DECIDE
HE WANTS TO DATE
SARAH THAT FEAR
OF TELLING HER
DOESN'T STOP HIM.

AND THAT
THEY'LL GO
ON DOUBLE
DATES WITH
ME AND
TEDD. HE'D
LIKE TEDD

AND... MAYBE IT
WASN'T THE BEST
IDEA, BUT I LIKE
THAT SAM SAW ME
TRANSFORM!

IT FELT GOOD TO
PROTECT SOMEONE
AND IT FELT GOOD
TO TRANSFORM IN
A PUBLIC PLACE!

I HATE HAVING TO
HIDE WHO I AM!

WOW HOW
LONG HAVE I
BEEN REPRESSING
THAT FEELING?

STOP THINKING
SO MUCH. ME
YOU NEED SLEEP

ALTHOUGH LUKE KNOWS I HAVE
POWER ANYWAY, AND I'M PRETTY SURE
FROM THOSE DREAMS I WAS HAVING
THAT RHODA AND CATALINA HAVE MAGIC
THEY'D PROBABLY LIKE TO TALK ABOUT

The Secret of Sam

THE
END



"Grace's face and figure recognition is heightened when her antennae is out. Is this because she's feeling the faces and bodies w th her psychic antennae?"



NO WHEN GRACE'S ANTENNAE ARE OUT, HER SPATIAL AWARENESS IS HEIGHTENED, SHE CAN VERY ACCURATELY JUDGE DISTANCES AND SIZES, AND YES, HER FACE AND FIGURE RECOGNITION IS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED.

WHILE HER ANTENNAE HAVE TO BE OUT TO GET THESE BOOSTS TO PERCEPTION IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HER TELEKINESIS, AND DOES NOT INVOLVE "FEELING" THINGS WITH HER ANTENNAE



BUT SHE COULD DO THAT, RIGHT?

WHAT?

SHE CAN FEEL AND "TOUCH" TH NGS REMOTELY WITH HER ANTENNAE.



COULD SHE, FOR EXAMPLE, GIVE SHOULDER RUBS FROM ACROSS THE ROOM?

IN... THEORY, PERHAPS. BUT I HAVE TO ASSUME A SHOULDER MASSAGE DONE WITH HANDS WOULD BE BETTER.



WHAT ABOUT WITH PRACTICE?

MAYBE BUT LET'S NOT CONFUSE THE ISSUE. THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER GRACE'S HEIGHTENED FACE AND FIGURE AWARENESS INVOLVES TOUCH IS "NO, IT IS PURELY VISUAL"



COULD SHE GIVE TWO PEOPLE SHOULDER RUBS AT THE SAME TIME?

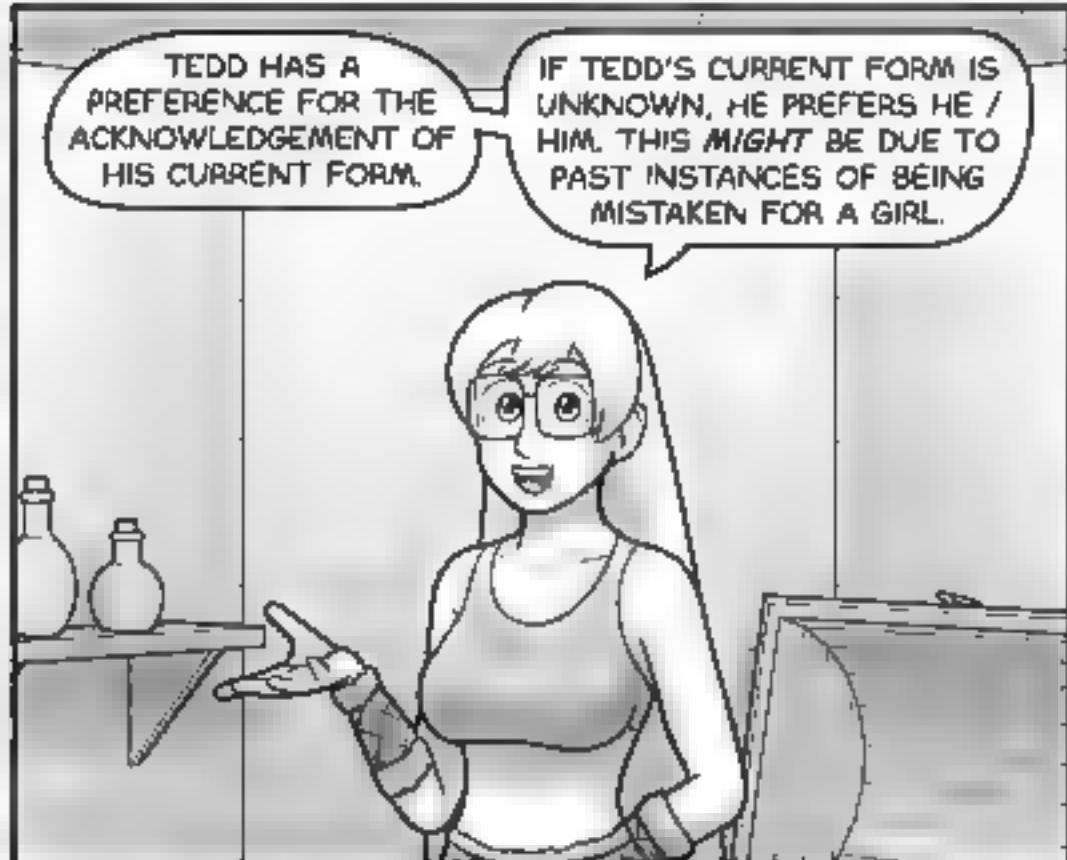
MAYBE WITH PRACTICE, BUT I'M GUESsing IT'S PRUDENT TO MOVE ON TO OTHER QUESTIONS



"What are Tedd's Preferred Gender Pronouns?"

TEDD HAS A PREFERENCE FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS CURRENT FORM.

IF TEDD'S CURRENT FORM IS UNKNOWN, HE PREFERS HE / HIM. THIS MIGHT BE DUE TO PAST INSTANCES OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR A GIRL.



THIS IS ALL VERY SPECIFIC TO TEDD, HOWEVER

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO PREFER THEY / THEM, AND TEDD WOULDN'T OBJECT TO THOSE, EITHER.

THEY / THEM ARE VALID SINGULAR PRONOUNS WHEN A GENDER IS UNSPECIFIED, WHICH IS NOTHING NEW

PLENTY OF PEOPLE AREN'T USED TO IT IN THAT CONTEXT, HOWEVER, AND CAN GET HUNG UP ON ITS PLURAL USAGE.



THIS CONFUSION IS UNDERSTANDABLE BUT IF SOMEONE IS REQUESTING PARTICULAR PRONOUNS, IT'S LIKELY IMPORTANT TO THEM.

I THINK THAT'S WORTH KEEPING IN MIND.

BONUS Q AND A: ELLIOT'S PREFERRED PRONOUNS.

IN GENERAL, HE / HIM, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE HE'S REThinking WHAT HE WANTS WHEN TRANSFORMED.



"Does size transformation affect people's voices?"

YES, BUT THE TYPE OF TRANSFORMATION AFFECTS HOW "OBEYS THE LAWS OF PHYSICS" IT IS.

IF A SIMPLE HEIGHT CHANGE, VOICES WILL GET LOWER IF TALLER, OR HIGHER IF SHORTER.

ELLIOT IN HIS STANDARD FEMALE FORM BASICALLY HAS THE SAME VOICE AS HIS "MALL" FORM FROM HIS DATE WITH ASHLEY, BUT THE LATTER IS HIGHER PITCHED.

IF SHRUNK ALL AROUND HOWEVER, THE MAGIC THAT MAKES BEING SHRUNK POSSIBLE WILL MAKE THE CHANGE LESS PRONOUNCED. A SLIGHTLY SHRUNK GIRL ELLIOT WILL STILL SOUND DEEPER THAN "MALL" ELLIOT.



IF SHRUNK A LOT, HOWEVER, GIRL ELLIOT WILL HAVE A NOTICEABLY HIGHER VOICE BUT NOT NEARLY AS HIGH (OR INAUDIBLE) AS IT ARGUABLY SHOULD BE.

OF COURSE, SOME SPELLS WILL REMOVE ALL DIFFERENCE IN HOW SOMEONE SOUNDS WHEN GROWN OR SHRUNK, BUT THAT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO DO AND IS NOT THE DEFAULT.

WHAT LEVEL WIZARD IS RHODA, AND HOW DO I CHEAT MY WAY TO IT?



"How does Tensaider's rental shop stay in business?"

EXCUSE ME?!

ONE, EVEN IN YOUR UNIVERSE, THERE ARE STILL RENTAL PLACES IN BUSINESS.

JUST BECAUSE BLOCK-BUSTER IS MAKING "THIS IS CLEARLY THE PAST" CAMEOS IN MOVIES DOESN'T MEAN ALL THE RENTAL PLACES ARE GONE!

TWO, DIFFERENT UNIVERSE DURING AN UNDEFINED YEAR, AND ONLY ABOUT A YEAR HAS PASSED .N UNIVERSE.

THREE, WE SELL SNACKS WITH GOOD PROFIT MARGINS BY THE REGISTER.

FOUR, WE'RE NEIGHBORS WITH A BUNCH OF FOOD PLACES, SO IT'S CONVENIENT FOR PLENTY OF PEOPLE TO PICK UP AND DROP OFF RENTALS WHILE GETTING THEIR LUNCHES AND DINNERS.

FIVE SUSAN

I CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE THAT MUCH IMPACT ON--

SUSAN.

THAT SAID, I'LL LIKELY BECOME A TEACHER OF FILM HISTORY OR SOMETHING LATER TO STAY PLOT RELEVANT

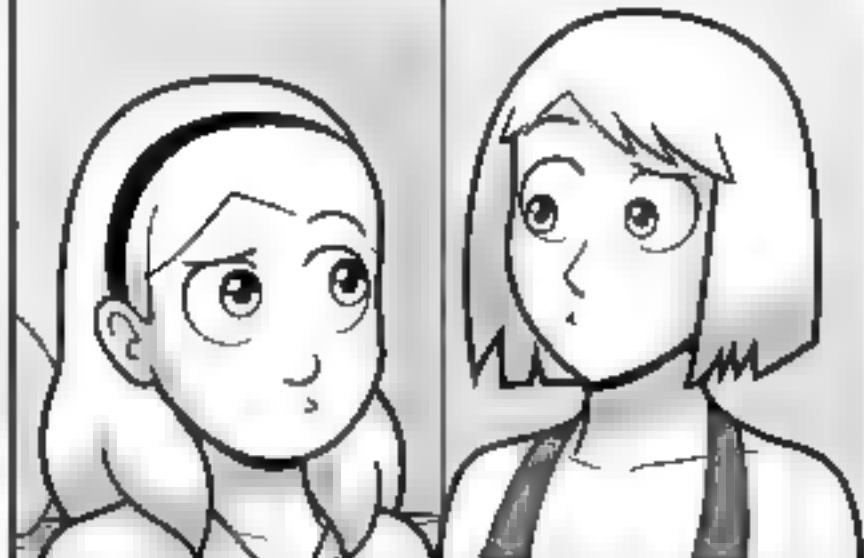
PRETEND TO BE SHOCKED WHEN THAT HAPPENS.

"How can we best tell Sarah and Diane apart?"



FIRST AND EASIEST IS SIMPLY THAT SARAH HAS SHOULDER LENGTH HAIR, AND DIANE HAS NOT SHOULDER LENGTH HAIR.

ALSO DIANE'S BROUGHT BACK THE SPIKY BANGS FROM HER CHILDHOOD.



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE! SARAH IS ALL ABOUT ROUND SHAPES, WITH A ROUND NOSE, JAW, AND MORE JUNK IN THE TRUNK!

HEY!



DIANE, MEANWHILE IS TALLER AND MORE ANGULAR WITH A TRIANGULAR NOSE AND JAW, AND LESS JUNK IN THE TRUNK!

HEY!



AMANDA, WILL YOU PLEASE STOP DIFFERENTIATING PEOPLE BY THE JUNK IN THEIR TRUNK?

HOW ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL PEOPLE APART?!



YOU JUST... SARAH AND DIANE ARE OUR MAIN HEALER AND ROGUE AND THEY'RE LEAVING.

OH CAMP BE RIGHT BACK



"Why didn't Voltaire try to have Tedd killed rather than traumatize him?"

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT?

ONE DOES NOT PROVOKE THE WRATH OF EDWARD VERRES LIGHTLY, NOT TO MENTION HIS MONSTER HUNTER EX WIFE.

I'M CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO ATTACK THEIR WHELP INDIRECTLY, CERTAINLY, BUT DIRECTLY? AND TO MURDER THEIR SON?

THEY'D CALL IN EVERY FAVOR THEY HAVE TO SEE ME SUFFER.

FURTHERMORE, I KNEW ARTHUR WOULD ARGUE FOR MAGIC'S CHANGE, AND TEDD WOULD ARGUE AGAINST.

I DIDN'T CONSIDER IT LIKELY TEDD WOULD MAKE A COMPELLING ARGUMENT, OR THAT THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL SEERS WHO WOULD AGREE WITH TEDD, BUT BOTH WERE POSSIBLE.

THESE POTENTIAL UNKNOWN SEERS COULD EVEN BE ARTHUR'S EQUALS.

GIVEN THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES AND X-FACTORS INVOLVED, I ELECTED TO FOCUS ON SABOTAGING TEDD'S POSITION BY SABOTAGING TEDD HIMSELF.

LET HIM WEAKEN HIS OWN POSITION AND DULL THE ARGUMENTS OF ANY POTENTIAL UNKNOWNS WHO MIGHT ALIY THEMSELVES WITH HIM.

YOU KNOW YOU COULD'VE JUST TOLD TEDD THE SECOND PURPOSE OF SEERS. RIGHT?

THAT WOULD HAVE MADE HIM INELIGIBLE FOR THE MEETING

IT WOULD HAVE?

I MEAN, THERE WAS STILL THE POTENTIAL FOR ADDITIONAL SEERS VOTING AGAINST THE CHANGE, AND I WANTED SOMEONE UNSTABLE THERE TO WEAKEN THEIR ARGUMENTS.

OBVIOUSLY

"Is (insert several character names here) somewhere in the autism spectrum?"

COMMON CHARACTERS ASKED ABOUT ARE TEDD, SUSAN, GRACE, AND NOAH, THOUGH THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES.

NONE OF US WERE INTENDED TO BE IN THE AUTISM SPECTRUM, BUT THE ANSWER ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS THAT

THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED MANY TIMES OF MULTIPLE CHARACTERS...

AND NEARLY EVERY TIME IT'S BEEN ASKED, IT'S BEEN AFTER A CHARACTER DID OR SAID SOMETHING DAN WOULD CONSIDER AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

THIS INCLUDES SOCIAL THINGS, AVersion TO BEING TOUCHED, GENERAL WAYS OF THINKING TALKING, ETC.

AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT, THIS HAS RESULTED IN SOME INTROSPECTION ON DAN'S PART

HE'S BASICALLY REACHED NO CONCLUSION ABOUT HIMSELF BEYOND "IT WOULD EXPLAIN A LOT"

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE AT HIS AGE GIVEN HOW SOME WITHIN THE SPECTRUM CAN ADAPT SOCIALLY OVER TIME

...AND THERE ARE OTHER POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THE THINGS THAT SUGGEST THIS POSSIBILITY

POINT IS, HE'S NOT QUALIFIED TO MAKE THAT CALL ABOUT HIMSELF, LET ALONE THE REST OF US WE'RE NOT QUALIFIED, EITHER.

WE'D HAVE TO DO A LOT MORE RESEARCH AND GET THE OPINIONS OF EXPERTS BEFORE EVEN ATTEMPTING TO INTENTIONALLY WRITE A CHARACTER WITHIN THE AUTISM SPECTRUM.

ALL THAT SAID IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE DAN'S ACCIDENTALLY WRITTEN CHARACTERS WHO COULD BE SO... THE ANSWER'S A SOLID "MAYBE?"

WITH THAT SETTLED, DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPLANATION FOR THE CAT EARS AND SUCH?

NONE WHATSOEVER.

"Speaking of research, how does Dan go about his for EGS?"

HE READS UP ON WHAT HE CAN WATCHES WHAT HE CAN...

HE USES ALL THOSE RESEARCH SKILLS THEY TAUGHT US IN SCHOOL!

EXCEPT THE DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM.

AW DANG, LOST MY PLATFORM SHOES.

DAN WATCHED REALITY TV ABOUT HUNTING FERAL HOGS FOR YOU PEOPLE



AND IF HE'S STILL CONFUSED HE RELIES ON HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON

SOCIAL MEDIA!

HELP!



TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
UH HUH
UH HUH
REALLY?
I SEE

SO THAT'S HOW IT IS



"What sort of spells can't be copied by wizards?"

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, EVERY SPELL CAN BE COPIED.

OF COURSE, I SAID "TECHNICALLY", SO IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

SARAH, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS HER SIMULATED TIME STOP SPELL. FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THIS SPELL CANNOT BE COPIED. BECAUSE MOST WIZARDS ARE INCAPABLE OF CASTING IT EVEN IF THEY HAVE THE PREREQUISITE POWER LEVELS FOR DOING SO.

BASICALLY, THEY'D HAVE TO BE A WIZARD WHO ALREADY HAD A COMPATIBLE AFFINITY FOR THAT SORT OF MAGIC.

A SEER COULD COPY SARAH'S SPELL, BUT IT WOULD TAKE MULTIPLE VIEWINGS. SOME THINKING IT THROUGH TO MAKE SENSE OF IT ON A TECHNICAL LEVEL...

AND A WOOD STICK WAND WOULDN'T WORK. THEY'D HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO USE.

SPEAKING OF, THE SIZE, SHAPE, MASS, AND MATERIAL OF WANDS CAN MATTER. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ABLE TO MAKE A WAND OTHERS CAN USE CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS WHAT THE WAND IS.

AS FOR WIZARDS COPYING SPELLS, SOME SPELLS ARE EFFECTIVELY UNIVERSAL AND CAN BE LEARNED BY ANYONE WHILE OTHERS ARE PERSONALIZED AND/OR SPECIAL IN WAYS THAT REQUIRE SOMEONE COMPATIBLE TO USE THEM.

AND WHETHER IT MESSES UP THE PLOT TO GIVE EVERYONE ACCESS TO A GIVEN SPELL.

SHHHHH!

"Can magic that teleports away things worn by a person remove piercings and implants?"

SO... WAIT. OPENING THIS CHEST TRIGGERED A DISARMING TRAP, BUT IT PUT ALL MY GEAR IN THIS SAME CHEST?

IT'S LIKE THIS DUNGEON DOESN'T WANT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

FIRST OFF, THIS QUESTION UPSETS ME

IT MADE ME CONTEMPLATE THINGS BEST LEFT NOT CONTEMPLATED.

WHY IS SHE STILL...

IF SUCH A SPELL IS SUCCESSFUL (SPELL RESISTANCE EXTENDS TO THINGS WORN), PIERCINGS CAN BE AFFECTED, BUT ONLY IF A SPELL IS DESIGNED TO ACCOUNT FOR IT

AS FOR IMPLANTS, MAGIC SAYS "NOPE" WITH PIERCINGS, IT MIGHT WORK, BUT IF SOMETHING IS INSIDE OF SOMEONE AND COULD BE CONSIDERED A PART OF THEM, THE ANSWER IS NOPE

WITH PIERCINGS, THE OVERLAP BETWEEN PERSON AND OBJECT CAN PROTECT FROM MAGIC DISARMING, BUT NOT ALWAYS.

THIS IS EGG, GOSH DARN IT

SO SOMEONE COULD CREATE SOMETHING THAT GIVES THEM ALL SORTS OF DANGEROUS MAGICAL POWERS WHEN IMPLANTED AND MAGIC WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

UH, WELL, OTHERS WOULDN'T JUST BE ABLE TO TELEPORT IT OUT OF THEM, BUT THERE'D PROBABLY BE OTHER—

SO YOU'RE SAYING I SHOULD DEFINITELY GET AN IRON-MAN STYLE MAGIC CRYSTAL OF POWER EMBEDDED IN MY CHEST?

NO. BAD IDEA.

"Why are so many characters LGBT+?
(No issue w th it, just wondering)"



ARE THERE
REALLY THAT MANY
CHARACTERS WHO—

THE ENTIRE MAIN
CAST AND A LOT
OF OTHERS.



THE ENTIRE
MAIN CAST?
BUT ELLIOT

PREFERS BEING A GIRL.
SOMETIMES, ADMITTED AN
ATTRACTION TO NOAH.



BUT
SUSAN...

ISN'T COMFORTABLE DOING
MUCH OF ANYTHING WITH ANYONE
BUT FINDS CATALINA ATTRACTIVE.
AND PROBABLY NANASE



YEAH, BUT SARAH...



OH.

NOT THAT ANY OF THIS
ANSWERS THE QUESTION.

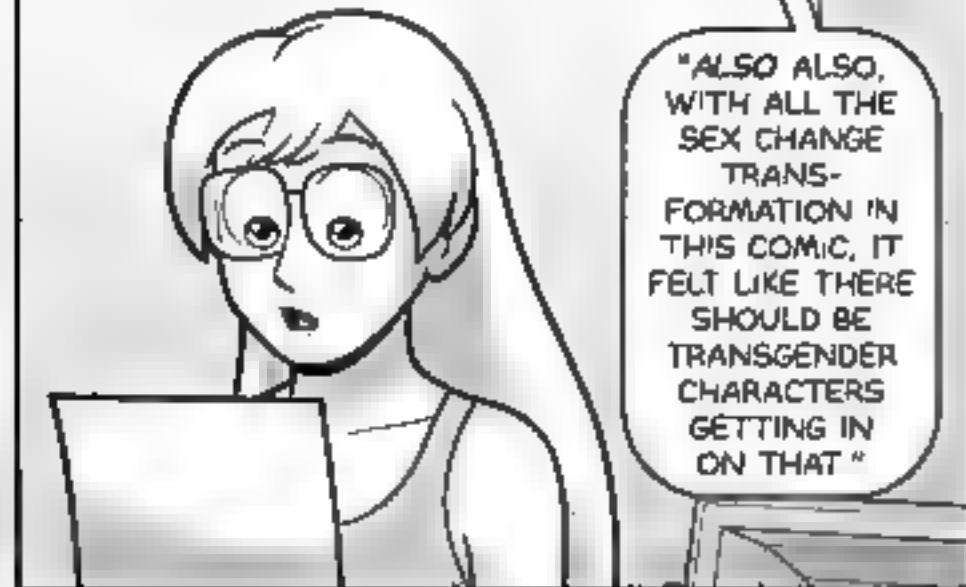


AS FOR ACTUALLY ANSWERING THE QUESTION OF WHY THERE ARE SO MANY LGBT+ CHARACTERS, I HAVE RECEIVED A DETAILED LETTER FROM DAN WITH THE ANSWER:



"GENDER FLUIDITY AND BISEXUALITY FEELS NORMAL AND LIKE THE DEFAULT TO ME"

"ALSO, I GREW UP IN THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES WANTING TO SEE MORE LGBT+ CHARACTERS."



P.S., A SINISTER POLITICAL AGENDA TO MAKE EVERYONE SUPER GAY?!



UH, NO. BUT THERE IS A PS

"I DON'T KNOW IF SUSAN IS ASEXUAL. AKA ACE. SHE COULD BE, BUT HER SEXUALITY IS SOMEWHAT AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL."

"I FEEL DEFINING HERS WOULD BE LIKE DEFINING MY OWN, WHICH MAKES PUTTING A LABEL ON IT AWKWARD FOR ME"



I GUESS THAT COULD BE SORT OF AWKWARD.

IT COULD BE, YES.



FOR THE RECORD THOUGH, I AM SUPER GAY IT'S WHY I WEAR A CAPE

YES, YES, WE KNOW



"It's been established via the EGSNP stories *Jones Marker* and *Escape From The Mall* that name-based affinities, in which people can have affinities based on strange names, are a thing. Could you intentionally change your name in the hope of getting specific spells?"

IF YOU'RE ASKING ABOUT GETTING A NAME-BASED AFFINITY BY CHANGING YOUR NAME, THE ANSWER IS USUALLY NO. THERE'S SOME WEIRD MAGICAL NONSENSE THAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE IS FIRST NAMED THAT SETS OFF MAGIC'S FUTURE IRONY SENSORS.

DO YOU WANT TO BE A CATGIRL?

(ALSO, I'M KITTY)

NOTE THAT THIS DOES MEAN A PARENT COULD INTENTIONALLY NAME A CHILD IN THE HOPE OF GIVING THEM AN AFFINITY

THIS MOST COMMONLY HAPPENS WHEN THE FIRST AND LAST NAME ARE REALLY ON THE NOSE THE OBVIOUS EXAMPLE BEING "CATALINA BOBCAT" GIRL HAS ALL SORTS OF CAT MAGIC AFFINITY

IF, HOWEVER, YOU'RE ASKING IF IT MIGHT HELP AN AWAKENED MAGIC USER GET SPECIFIC SPELLS, THE ANSWER IS YES.

IF CATALINA WERE TO CHANGE HER NAME TO "REX McDGBT" LATER, SHE WOULD NOT GAIN AN AFFINITY FOR DOG SPELLS.

IF SOMEONE WANTS A SPELL SO BADLY THAT THEY CHANGE THEIR NAME, IT CAN IMPACT WHAT SPELLS THEY GET NEXT

THAT IS, HOWEVER, DIFFERENT FROM HAVING "AFFINITY" FOR A SPELL. NAMING ONE'S SELF "TIMEY STOPSIM" WOULD NOT SUDDENLY MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO GET SARAH'S SPELL, WHICH REQUIRES A NATURAL AFFINITY FOR IT

WHAT IF A PARENT NAMED THEIR KID "TIMEY STOPSIM"?

I DON'T MAYBE?

SOMEONE TRY NAMING THEIR KID THAT

ANOTHER FACTOR IN NAME-BASED AFFINITY IS, IF A PERSON DOESN'T ACCEPT THEIR NAME IT WILL BE IRRELEVANT TO THEM.

THUS EXPLAINING MY LACK OF CHEERLEADER SPELLS.

NAH, NOT WITH "TIFFANY"** YOU'D NEED A NAME LIKE "BOUNCY POMPOMS"

WHICH IS WORTH NOTING. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT MOST NAMES. HERE, "CATALINA SMITH" WOULDN'T RESULT IN A NAME-BASED AFFINITY

(SHE COULD STILL GET CAT SPELLS, BUT IT WOULDN'T BE A NAME-BASED AFFINITY)

* "Susan" is technically her middle name

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE SORT OF FULL NAMES YOU SEE IN STORIES THAT ARE ABSURDLY ON THE NOSE AND/OR FULL OF PUNS NAME-BASED AFFINITIES IN GENERAL ARE RARE

IT'S A JOKE ABOUT REALLY PROPHETIC NAMES IN FICTION THAT PREDICT THEIR FUTURE. LIKE SOMEONE NAMED "ROB N SOARHIGH" CONVENIENTLY WINDING UP WITH BIRD POWERS.

THAT'S WHY "WHEN FIRST NAMED" WAS SPECIFIED.

THERE IS AN EXCEPTION TO NAME CHANGING. HOWEVER, IF THE CHANGE OF A FIRST NAME IS DONE FOR DEEPLY PERSONAL REASONS, AND IF IT CREATES A PUN WITH THEIR EXISTING LAST NAME, IT CAN RESULT IN A NAME-BASED AFFINITY

ODDS ARE LOW, BECAUSE THEIR FIRST NAME WOULD HAVE TO BE DEEPLY PERSONAL WHILE ALSO FORMING A PUN WITH THEIR LAST NAME, BUT IT COULD HAPPEN.

SO WAIT IF I CHANGE MY LAST NAME FIRST, AND THEN CHANGE MY FIRST NAME I CAN MANUFACTURE A NAME-BASED AFFINITY?

UH... MAYBE? BUT THE "DEEP PERSONAL REASONS" FOR THE FIRST NAME ARE KEY, SO I DON'T THINK JUST DOING IT FOR AN AFFINITY WORKS.

AND IF ON A DEEP PERSONAL LEVEL I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SUMMON CUPCAKES?

I DON'T KNOW BUT I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND IT

For our final question, "what are Grace's antennae made out of? Are they just hair?"



THEY'RE NOT JUST HAIR! THERE IS AN ANTENNAE-E CORE SURROUNDED BY HAIR-LIKE FUR.

"AN ANTENNAE-E CORE"? THE HECK DOES THAT MEAN?



YOU KNOW LIKE AN URYUOM ANTENNA, BUT WITH FUR, AND NO BALL-DEALIE.

YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE AN EXPERT ON THIS.



I'M NOT! URYUOMS ARE MORE CLASSIFIED THAN MAGIC! ALL I'M SORT OF SURE OF IS THAT THEIR ANTENNAE DON'T HAVE BONES! UNLESS THEY DO

MAYBE WE SHOULD SHAVE GRACE'S ANTENNAE?



WHAT WAS THAT?

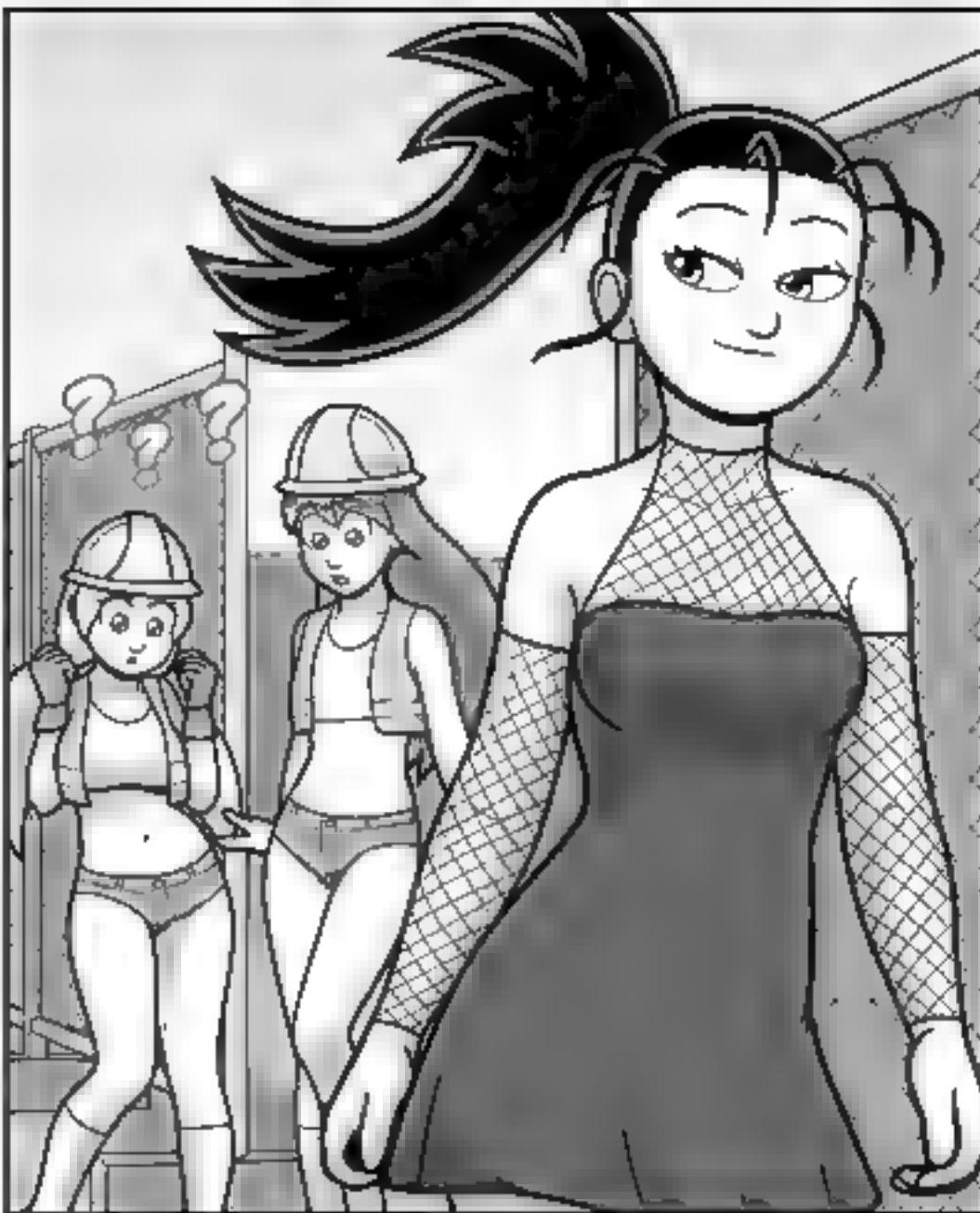


WE WERE JUST SAYING THANKS FOR READING! UNTIL NEXT TIME!

AND GRACE IS LOVELY AND WE WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING WEIRD TO HER.



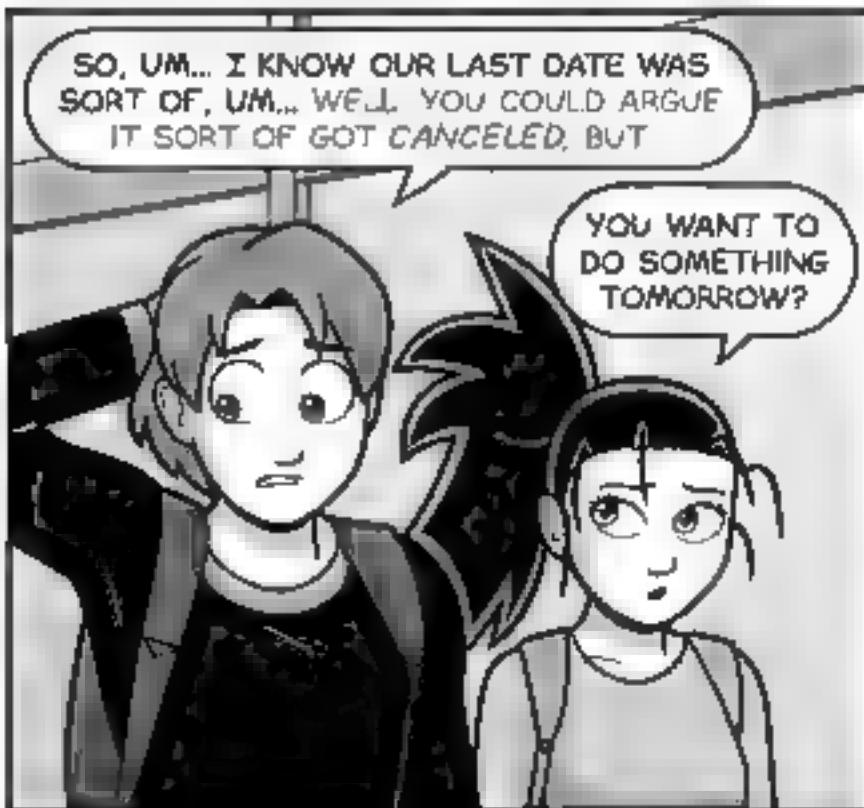




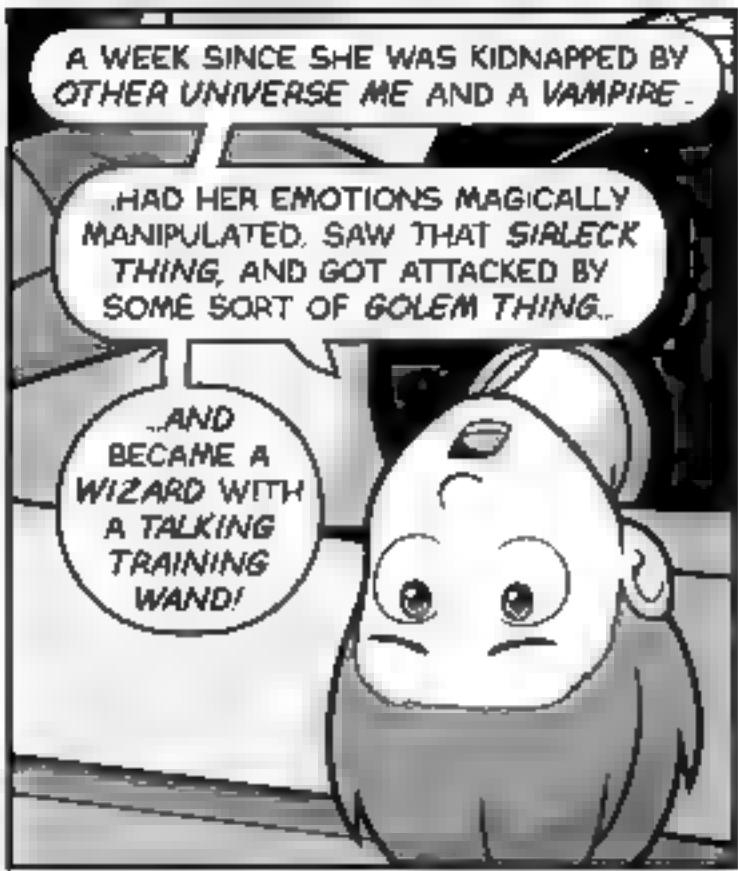
The sorceress walked away with a
th the lovely legs she had given
the two construction workers, baf-
foked at each other. They were ea-
ing good looking, but they found
ared interest in architects.



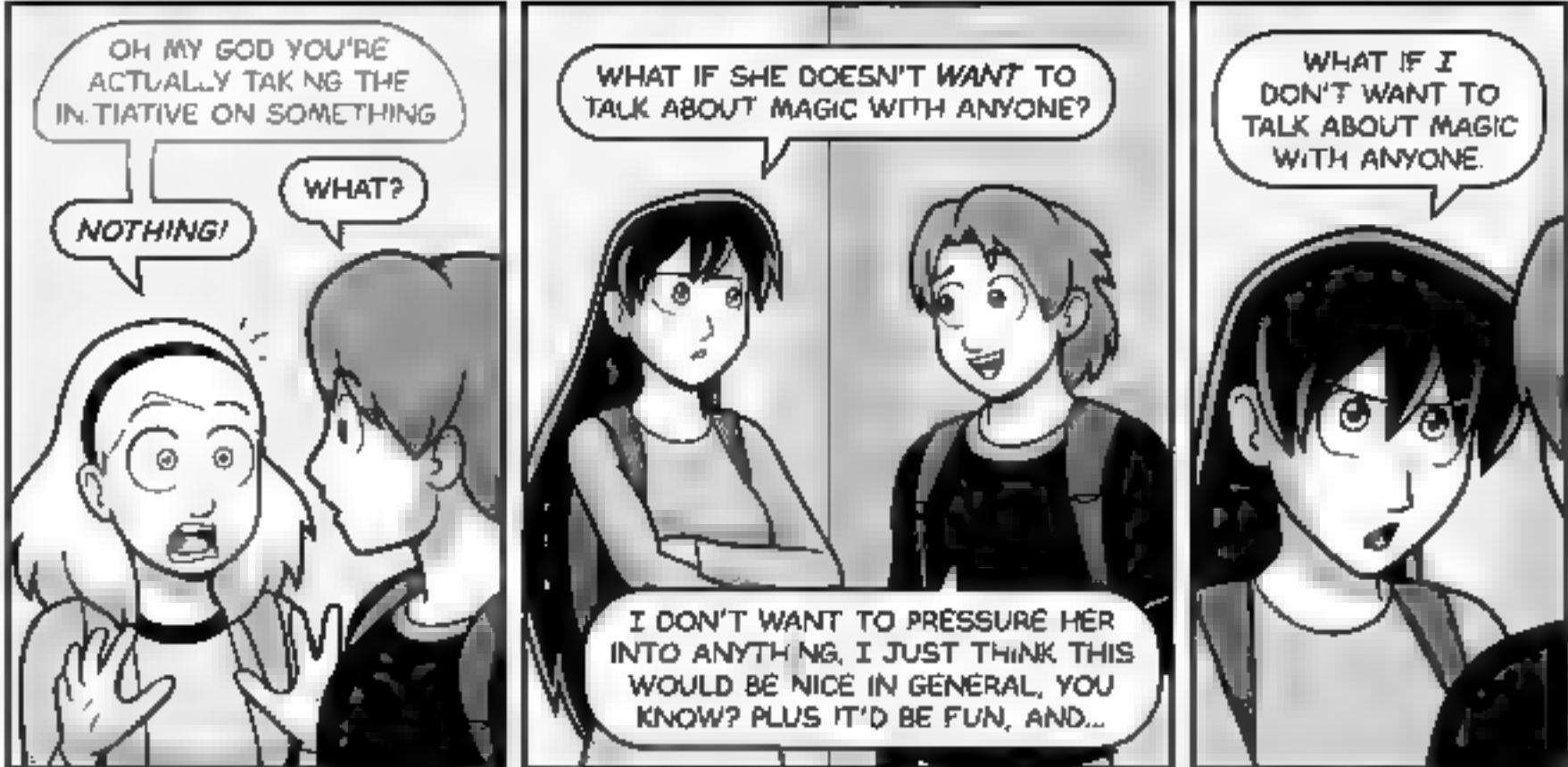
The Thursday after Eliot and Ashley's last "date".



The Saturday after the r date (which was, shockingly, uneventful)



Monday morning, MNHS (omg time is flying you guys)



UH... I MEAN, YOU DON'T HAVE
TO TALK ABOUT MAGIC. I'D LIKE IT
IF SHE KNEW EVERYONE THERE HAD
EXPERIENCE WITH MAGIC. BUT...

I'M SORRY YOU JUST WANT TO DO
SOMETHING NICE, BUT I DON'T THINK MY
BEING THERE WOULD HELP ASHLEY

SHE DOES THINK
YOU'RE REALLY
COOL, THOUGH.

THAT'S...
FLATTERING,
BUT...

EVERYONE'S
GOING TO
WANT TO OPEN
UP AND TALK
ABOUT MAGIC,
AND... I DON'T
THINK I'M UP
FOR THAT
RIGHT NOW

OR JUST
A PARTY IN
GENERAL.
REALLY

SUSAN...

I'M SORRY BUT
I DON'T THINK I'LL
BE GOING I'LL SEE
YOU ALL LATER.

THE INVITE'S
OPEN IF YOU
CHANGE YOUR
MIND!

TEDD
ARE YOU
A GIRL?

UH... YEAH. I
FIGURED NOBODY'S
GONNA SAY ANY-
THING, SO WHY
THE HECK NOT?

IS THIS
ABOUT THE
VAMPIRES AT
THE MALL?

SHE
HASN'T
SEEMED
UPSET.

NO, BUT... I HAVEN'T SAID
ANYTHING FOR PRIVACY'S
SAKE, BUT WHEN I TALKED
TO HER THE DAY AFTER, SHE
SAID SOMETHING LIKE SHE
WAS "NUMB" FROM HAVING
TOO MANY FEELINGS TO
SETTLE ON ONE

SHE'S FEELING MORE
THAN SHE'S LETTING
ON, AND, WELL...

...A PARTY WITH
EVERYONE TALKING
ABOUT MAGIC MIGHT
BRING THAT UP AND
THE WHOLE "HOW DID
YOU GET MAGIC"
QUESTION.

OH, OH, DAMMIT
HER STORY IS A
VAMPIRE ATTACKED
HER AND IMMORTALS
APPROACHED HER
RIGHT? AND THAT'S
ALSO HOW
NANASE.

DAMMIT OF COURSE
SHE DOESN'T WANT
TO TALK ABOUT HER
MAGIC RIGHT NOW

WOULDN'T IT BE
GOOD FOR SUSAN
TO TALK ABOUT
IT, THOUGH?

MAYBE, BUT
WE SHOULDN'T
PRESSURE HER
ESPECIALLY NOT
AT A PARTY

IS THE PARTY
A BAD IDEA? I
THOUGHT IT WOULD
BE GOOD FOR
EVERYONE, BUT...

I THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA. JUST
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY IF ANY
ONE DOESN'T FEEL UP FOR IT OKAY?

INCLUDING ASHLEY
SHE MIGHT NEED
TIME, TOO.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING
I DON'T PREPARE AN
ASSORTMENT OF TRANS-
FORMATION PARTY GAMES?

THAT MIGHT BE A BIT
MUCH FOR ASHLEY?

I'M STILL GOING
TO BRAINSTORM.

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ASHLEY ABOUT THIS?

AFTER LUNCH, OR MAYBE TOMORROW? I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SAY IF NANASE AND JUSTIN ARE COMING.

WHAT IF IT TURNS OUT ASHLEY'S NOT UP FOR IT?

ELLEN AND GRACE ARE GOING TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT

WELL, IT MIGHT'VE BEEN MY IDEA, BUT TEDD'S HOUSE, TEDD'S PARTY, AND HE.. SHE'S MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS PARTY'S HAPPENING EITHER WAY, NOW

YEAH! I'M ALL FOR HELPING ASHLEY OUT, BUT IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE WE'VE ALL GOTTEN TOGETHER!

I WANT CAKE. PIZZA. AND EVERYONE HANGING OUT!

PLUS, WHEN I ASKED MY DAD ABOUT IT, HE VOLUNTEERED TO PAY FOR FOOD AND FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO BE UNTIL SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

REALLY? THAT'S... STRANGE, ISN'T IT?

BUYING ALL THAT FOOD WHEN IT'S NOBODY'S BIRTHDAY, MAYBE BUT REMEMBER WHO MY DAD IS



HE PROBABLY HAS SOME SECRET MISSION HE WAS GOING ON ANYWAY

PARDON ME, BUT WOULD YOU BE UP FOR A HOUSE GUEST THIS WEEKEND LAVENDER?



Meanwhile, over at Moperville South High School...

SO IT'S NOT JUST A PARTY FOR ASHLEY TO GET TO KNOW PEOPLE WITH MAGIC, BUT IT IS THAT

YEAH!

AND I KNOW YOU THINK ASHLEY IS THE DEVIL BECAUSE SHE'S UNUSUALLY "GOOD". NANASE, BUT PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT SHE AND I ARE DRAGON SISTERS NOW



ELLEN
WHAT DOES
THAT EVEN

**DRAGON
SISTERS.**

HM... A CASUAL PARTY IN WHICH WE'RE ENCOURAGED TO CASUALLY PLAY AROUND WITH MAGIC, AND I DON'T HAVE TO BE A GIRL?

I'M IN.



THOUGH I COULD BE A GIRL... BUT THERE'S NO REAL POINT WITHOUT A BUNCH OF STRAIGHT MALE ONLOOKERS.

OH! BUT I COULD ANSWER THE DOOR WHEN THE PIZZA'S DELIVERED!

I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T LIKE BEING A GIRL, JUSTIN.



I HAVE A VERY LIMITED AND SPECIFIC INTEREST IN IT



NANASE
AND
JUSTIN
ARE IN.

WHICH JUST
LEAVES ASHLEY
AND SUSAN AS
A "MAYBE"

YEAH, MAYBE I GUESS
SUSAN COULD CHANGE HER
MIND BY SATURDAY. I
REALLY HOPE SO.

OOH,
YEAH I
CAN
ASK...

NO WAIT
SHE'S WITH
LIZ I'D
BETTER ASK
HER LATER

BUT YOU'D TELL
ME IF THERE WAS
PROBLEM WITH
YOU AND ELLIOT?

OF COURSE I
WOULD! BUT LIZ,
HE'S LOVELY

S HE REALLY? BECAUSE EVER SINCE
YOUR SECOND DATE YOU'VE BEEN ACTING
A WHOLE LOT LIKE YOU DID WHEN YOU
STARTED TO REALIZE TOM WAS A JERK

IT'S NOTHING
TO DO WITH
ELLIOT, OKAY?

THEN WHAT
IS GOING ON
WITH YOU?

YOU CAN
TELL ME

LET'S JUST
GET LUNCH,
OKAY?

Later, towards the end of the school day...

A PARTY? IS IT SOMEONE'S BIRTHDAY?

SHOULD I TELL HER WHAT ACTUALLY INSPIRED THE PARTY?

UH...



THREE CAMERA SITCOMS CAN FEEL LIKE SHORT PLAYS, THUS MAKING THE SOUNDS OF THE STUDIO AUDIENCE BENEFICIAL TO THE EXPERIENCE

WHAT?



WHOOPS,
SORRY WRONG
S.TCOM FACT

VERY RARELY DO
THINGS GO WELL WHEN
PEOPLE AREN'T OPEN
AND TRUTHFUL IN
THEIR RELATIONSHIPS.



THAT'S NOT
SPECIFICALLY A
SITCOM FACT, BUT
THERE ARE SO
MANY EXAMPLES
IN THEM!

SERIOUSLY, YOU'D
THINK FRASIER WOULD
KNOW BETTER. HE'S A
PSYCHIATRIST, FOR
GOODNESS SAKE!



I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE
TO GET TO KNOW SOME
OTHER MAGIC USERS.

THEN TEDD
THOUGHT EVERY-
ONE MIGHT LIKE
CAKE AND PIZZA.



OTHER MAGIC USERS?

YEAH, LIKE NANASE, ELLEN AND TEDD. EVERYONE WHO'S GOING CAN USE MAGIC.

THEY'RE NICE AND COOL AND GOOD LISTENERS AND I THINK YOU'D LIKE THEM.

SO THE PARTY'S AT TEDD'S HOUSE, BUT IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO HAVE IT FOR ME?

YOU INSPIRED THE PARTY, BUT IT'S TEDD'S PARTY FOR HIS FRIENDS TO HANG OUT AND HAVE FUN AND YOU'RE JUST BEING INVITED LIKE ANYONE ELSE

YOU DON'T WANT TO SAY IT'S FOR ME SO I DON'T FEEL PRESSURED.

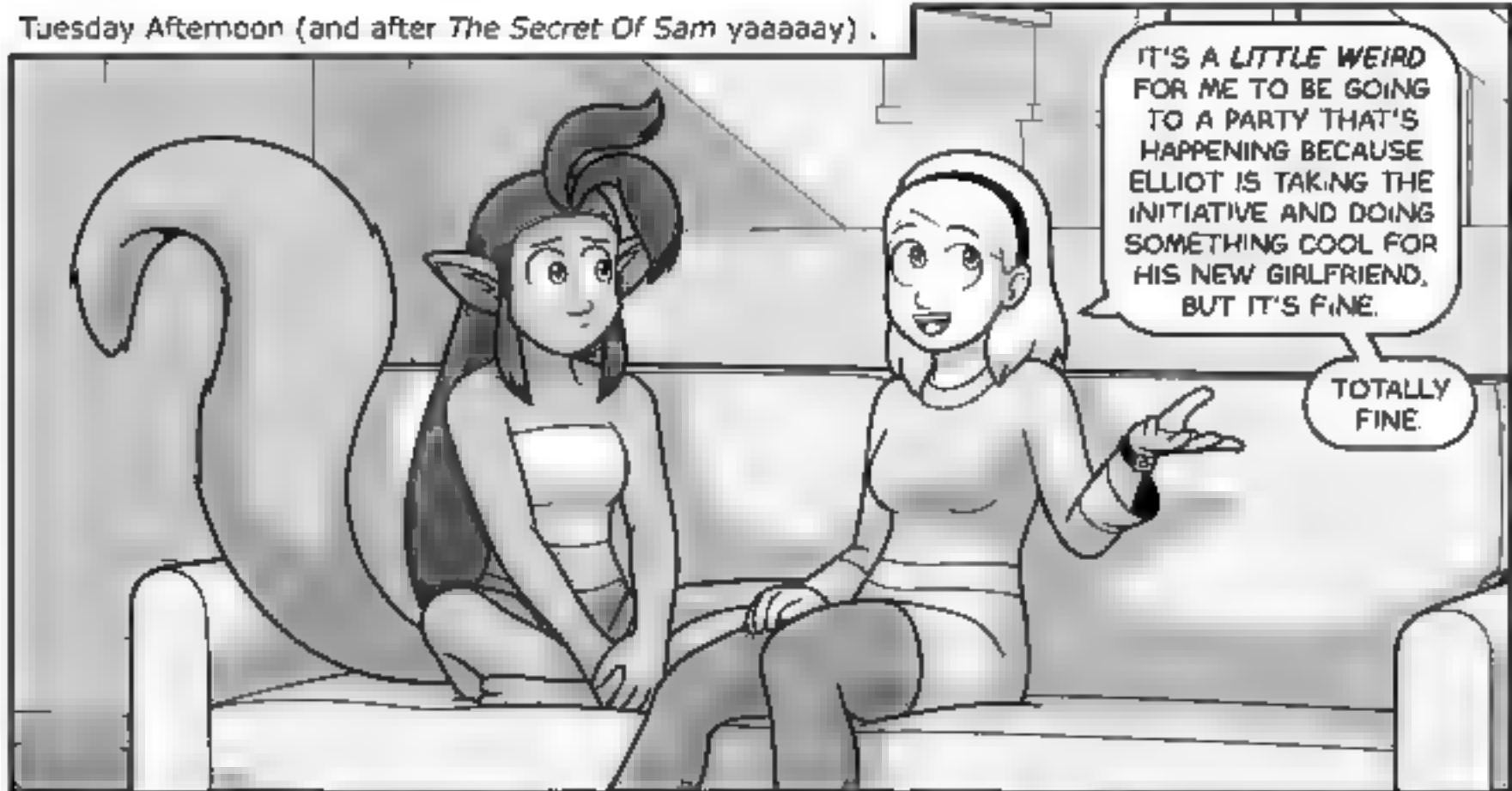
IT'S FACTUALLY ACCURATE THAT TEDD IS HAVING THE PARTY EITHER WAY AT THIS POINT.

..AND IT'S TOTALLY OKAY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO--

Kiss

I'D LOVE TO GO.

Tuesday Afternoon (and after *The Secret Of Sam* yaaaaay) .



HEY,
SARAH.

HEY
TEDD.

YOU TELL
HER ABOUT
THE SMOKE
WIZARD YET,
GRACE?

UH...

SMOKE
WIZARD?

I WOULD'VE TALKED
ABOUT IT AT SCHOOL,
BUT FOR ALL WE
KNOW, THEY'RE A
CLASSMATE

WHAT HAPPENED? ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M FINE! I... UH...

THAT, AND
IT'S GRACE'S
STORY

I WAS AT THE COMIC
SHOP AND I COULD
TELL SOMEONE I KNEW
WAS TRANSFORMED

INTO
SMOKE?

NO NO, THEY WEREN'T
THE WIZARD. IT WAS
A SUBTLE CHANGE

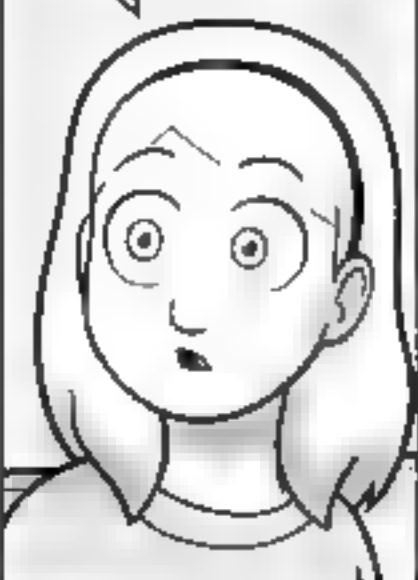
EASY FOR
MOST PEOPLE
TO MISS, BUT I
COULD TELL.

ANYWAY I WAS WORRIED THEY MIGHT HAVE
MADE A DEAL WITH AN IMMORTAL JERK FOR
A MAGIC MARK, SO I ASKED THEM ABOUT IT

YOU JUST ASKED SOMEONE IF THEY MADE A DEAL WITH AN IMMORTAL FOR TRANSFORMATION MAGIC?

YEAH. ANYWAY, THEY DIDN'T, BUT THEY DID HAVE A MAGIC MARK AND WE GOT TO TALKING ABOUT STUFF

AND AFTER WE WENT SOMEWHERE RELATIVELY PRIVATE, A WIZARD MADE OF SMOKE OVERHEARD THEM MENTION TRANSFORMATION, AND WANTED TO SEE THEM DO IT



NO IDEA. SO I CHANGED INTO MY THREE TAILED FORM TO INTIMIDATE THEM...

OKAY... SO... SOME ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS KNOWS YOU CAN TRANSFORM, AND A WIZARD WHO TURNS INTO SMOKE DOES, TOO?



BUT THEIR REACTION WAS TOTALLY LIKE "I AM A WIZARD WHO WANTED A NEW SPELL", AND THEY SMOKED OFF

YEP. BUT WIZARDS CAN'T COPY MY CHANGES. SO THAT'S GOOD.



YEP WELL, I'M PRETTY SURE THEY WERE HOPING FOR A NEW SPELL AND LIKE TRANSFORMATION, BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT

AND YOU'RE NOT SAYING WHO THE OTHER PERSON WAS, OR YOU'D HAVE SAID THEIR NAME ALREADY



I'M NOT

I SUPER WANT TO, I HATE KEEPING SECRETS, BUT I'M NOT



IT'S OKAY GRACE WE
TRUST YOU WITH OUR
SECRETS AND SOMEONE
ELSE IS TRUSTING YOU
WITH THEIRS.

IT ONLY SAYS GOOD
THINGS ABOUT YOU THAT
YOU'RE NOT OUTING
THEM TO US.



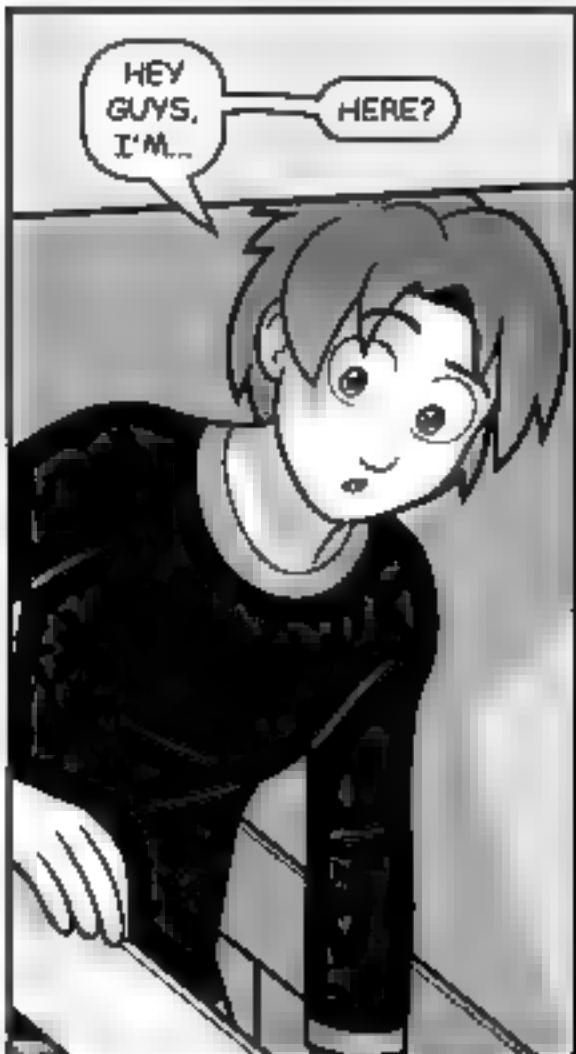
ILL ADVISED TACKLE HUG

BY JEFF WOOD

HEY GUYS,
I'M... HERE?

HI ELLIOT! I
COMPLIMENTED
GRACE WHILE SHE
WAS FEELING
EMOTIONAL.

AH.



OH MY GOD.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT

I CAN SEE THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN SUSAN AND DIANE NOW!

REALLY? MY GOING ON A DATE WITH LUCY IS THAT SHOCKING TO YOU?

WHAT? NO. WE'VE SEEN YOU KISS HER.

YOU TWO HAVE BEEN ABOUT AS DISCREET AS I USED TO BE WITH MY MAGIC

YOU HAVE MAGIC?

OH, WELL, IT'S JUST. WE AH... GIGGLE

YES! THAT HELPS! DO MORE OF THAT!

HUH? WHAT?

NOTHING. I'M NOT WEIRD. YOU'RE WEIRD.

EVERYTHING IS NORMAL.

ALL LUKE AND I'VE REALLY DECIDED ON IS THAT WE'RE HAVING OUR FIRST REAL DATE ON FRIDAY...

BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO.

I KEEP BLANKING ON ANYTHING THAT'S NOT "DINNER AND A MOVIE", WHICH...

I MEAN, THAT'S NOT BAD, BUT...

BOWLING.

UM, EXCUSE ME, DIANE,
BUT THIS IS A PRIVATE CONVERSATION?

ALSO, TELL ME MORE

IT'S FUN, THEY HAVE FOOD, YOU CAN PLAY IT AT YOUR OWN PACE WHILE TALKING, AND THE CLOSEST ALLEY HAS AN ARCADE, SO EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO WAIT (AND ON A FRIDAY NIGHT, YOU WILL)...

THERE ARE PLENTY OF CONVERSATION STARTERS TO EASE TENSION AND HELP YOU GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.

IT'S ALSO A GOOD WAY TO GAUGE HOW COMPETITIVE AND CONSIDERATE THEY ARE. YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM HOW SOMEONE PLAYS A GAME

JUST DON'T FORGET TO WEAR SOCKS, AND DON'T BRING YOUR OWN BOWLING BALL UNLESS YOU WANT TO SPEND THE WHOLE TIME WAITING FOR YOUR LANE SITTING AROUND WITH IT!

ALSO, GIVE LUCY AND ME SPACE IF YOU SEE US THERE

THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING FOR OUR FIRST DATE, TOO.

OH HEY, ISN'T THAT SARAH?

SHE'S GOING TO THE PARTY TOO.

ELLIOT SAID EVERYONE WHO'S GOING TO THE PARTY HAS MAGIC
I WONDER WHAT SHE CAN DO?

OH HEY, ISN'T THAT SARAH?

SHE'S GOING TO THE PARTY TOO.

ELLIOT SAID EVERYONE WHO'S GOING TO THE PARTY HAS MAGIC
I WONDER WHAT SHE CAN DO?

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE, LITTLE MOUSE!

EEEEEEK!

AWWW,
SHE'S SO CUTE!

LET ME HOLD HER!

OH MY! HOW EMBARRASSING!

NO! BAD BRAIN! YOU WOULD NOT LIKE THAT HAPPENING FOR REAL!

PROBABLY!

BUMP

COMIN'
THROUGH!

HEY!

CLUMSY
FOOL!

I'LL...

STOP THAT! YOU'RE
GOING TO BE ABLE TO
DO MAGIC SOMEDAY!
YOU CAN'T VENT BY
IMAGINING IMPULSIVE
MAGIC REVENGE
ANYMORE!

LIKE MAKING
HIM FLOAT LIKE
A BALLOON IF HE
CAN'T PROPERLY
WALK AROUND
PEOPLE!

OR TELEPORTING
HIM ONTO THE
ROOF SO HE
MISSES CLASS!

OR SENDING
HIM BACK TO
KINDERGARTEN
TO LEARN BASIC
MANNERS!

WHAT AM I,
THE DEVIL?!

WHY AM I SO GOOD AT THINKING UP
DISPROPORTIONATE MAGIC REVENGE?!

MAYBE I SHOULD FOCUS ON FANTASIES ABOUT
PEOPLE USING MAGIC ON ME. AT LEAST THEN—

BRRHHH-ING!

EEEP!



ELLIOT'S A
REALLY GOOD
GUY HE'D BE
APPALLED BY MY
FANTASIES.

FANTASIES OF SILLY
TRANSFORMATION
INDULGENCE AND
VENTING ANGER
ABOUT INJUSTICE
AND BIGOTRY?

FANTASIES OF
CHANGING PEOPLE
WITHOUT THEIR
PERMISSION!

AH YES, SUCH AS YOUR
EEEVIL STORY OF TURNING
ALL POLITICANS WHO
ACCEPT CORPORATE BRIBES
INTO HEAVY CAT GIRLS.



HEY RHODA.

HI GRACE

SO... I'M A HUMAN-ALIEN-SQUIRREL HYBRID WITH TRANSFORMATION POWERS.

REALLY?! I HAVE SIZE CHANGE MAGIC!



I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT!

YEAH! AND MY GIRLFRIEND CATALINA HAS CAT-THEMED MAGIC!

THAT'S SUPER COOL! MY BOYFRIEND AND I KNOW A LOT ABOUT MAGIC. WE SHOULD DOUBLE DATE!

WE TOTALLY SHOULD!



BUT BEFORE THAT, WE'RE HAVING A PARTY ON SATURDAY! WANNA GO?

SURE! I'LL BRING DIANE AND LUCY! THEY'RE SECRETLY SUPER NICE. AND IT'S OKAY TO BRING THEM BECAUSE KEEPING SECRETS ABOUT MAGIC AND STUFF IS GARBAGE!



WHAT? I
CAN'T DO
MAGIC.

YOU WERE SERIOUSLY SO
CONFIDENT THAT EVERY PART
OF THOSE DREAMS WERE
ACCURATE THAT YOU SPILLED
YOUR BIGGEST SECRET?

NOW THAT I'VE
CONFIRMED YOU AND
CATALINA HAVE MAGIC,
I'D BETTER TELL MY
NOT-YET-FATHER-IN-LAW
ALL ABOUT IT

HE'LL FIND OUT
ANYWAY IF I START
INVITING YOU OVER.
THE GOVERNMENT IS
GOING TO HAVE SUCH
A FILE ON YOU!

OR...

PAT
PAT



GRACE, WHAT THE HELL?
YOU REVEALING YOUR SECRETS
COULD WIND UP REVEALING MY
SECRETS. AND THE SECRETS
OF ALL OUR FRIENDS!

WE NEVER
AGREED TO
THAT!

'TIS I, ARTHUR!
KEEPING TABS ON
TEDD'S ASSOCIATES!

IF YOU, TEDD'S ONE
TRUE LOVE, CANNOT
BE TRUSTED TO KEEP
SECRETS LIKE THIS,
THEN PERHAPS HE
CAN'T BE TRUSTED
WITH A LAB!

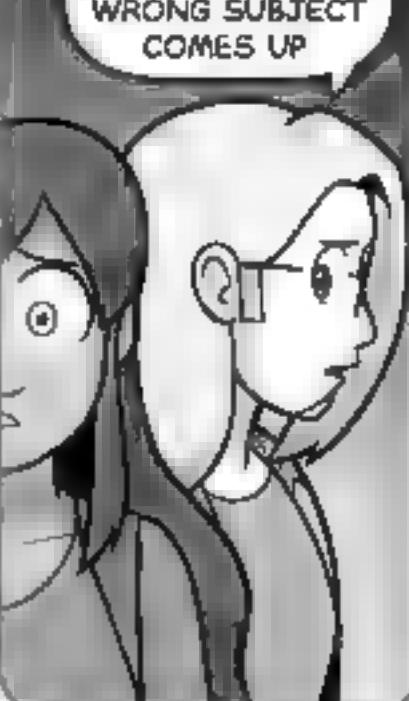


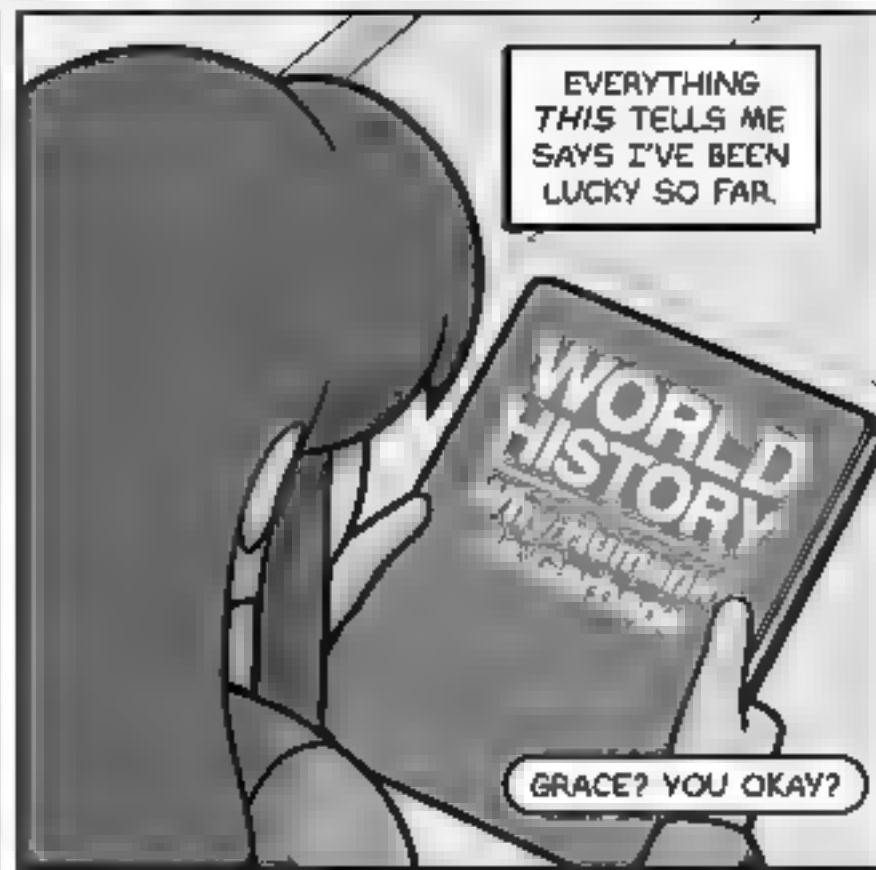
YOU'RE.
YOU'RE NOT
HUMAN?

I'M HUMAN!
I'M JUST ALSO
OTHER THINGS!

GET AWAY
FROM ME,
FREAK!

A LOT OF
PEOPLE SEEM
GREAT UNTIL THE
WRONG SUBJECT
COMES UP





MEANWHILE, in a metaphorical corner of Susan's mind .



SARAH, YOU KNOW SUSAN BETTER THAN ANYONE. CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING WE COULD SAY TO HER?

BEYOND THAT WE'D LOVE TO SEE HER AT THE PARTY? NOT REALLY

I HATE SAYING IT, BUT A SMALL PART OF ME WOULD BE SORT OF GLAD IF SHE DIDN'T COME.

I KNOW, I KNOW! BELIEVE ME, I WANT HER TO COME! IT'S JUST

GASP

WE'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO SHOW OFF MAGIC STUFF AT THIS PARTY RIGHT? LIKE FURRY FORMS, GENDER CHANGE, BODY MORPHS, ALL THAT JAZZ?

I GUESS, WE DON'T WANT TO OVERDO IT AND SPOOK ASHLEY BUT WE COULD SHOW OFF A LITTLE

RIGHT YEAH IT'S JUST... I'M NOT SURE I'D BE AS COMFORTABLE DOING THAT WITH SUSAN THERE.

AH, THE TRICK THERE IS TO EMBRACE DEFIANCE OF SOCIETAL PRESSURE TO CONFORM!

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT SOCIETY. I'M WORRIED ABOUT SUSAN'S LOOK OF DISAPPROVAL WHEN I SHOW OFF A CURVY FOX FORM.



OH, I MEAN. I DOUBT SHE'D SAY ANYTHING...

BUT THE LOOK... I HAVEN'T EXACTLY TOLD SUSAN HOW MUCH I'VE TAKEN TO TRANSFORMATION FOR FUN...

I'M SURE SHE'D BE OKAY WITH IT. BESIDES, THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE GOING TO GET INOCULATED TO THAT LOOK IS BY GETTING USED TO IT

YOU WOULD KNOW WOULDN'T YOU.



JUST A SMALL
GET TOGETHER
WITH ELLIOT AND
HIS FRIENDS.

UH-HUH...

UH, YEAH, IT WAS A
MUTUAL BREAKUP WORST
I CAN SAY IS I ALMOST
ALWAYS HAD TO MAKE
THE DECISIONS?

UH-HUH.

YES, ELLIOT'S GENUINELY
A GOOD PERSON. REALLY, I
PUT ON MORE OF AN ACT
ON THAT REVIEW SHOW
WE DO THAN HE DOES.

UH-HUH.

I LIKE QUILL,
EXCEPT FOR WHEN
HE DOES STUFF
LIKE FORGET ABOUT
THAT WOMAN HE
HAD ON BOARD.
THAT'S NOT COOL.

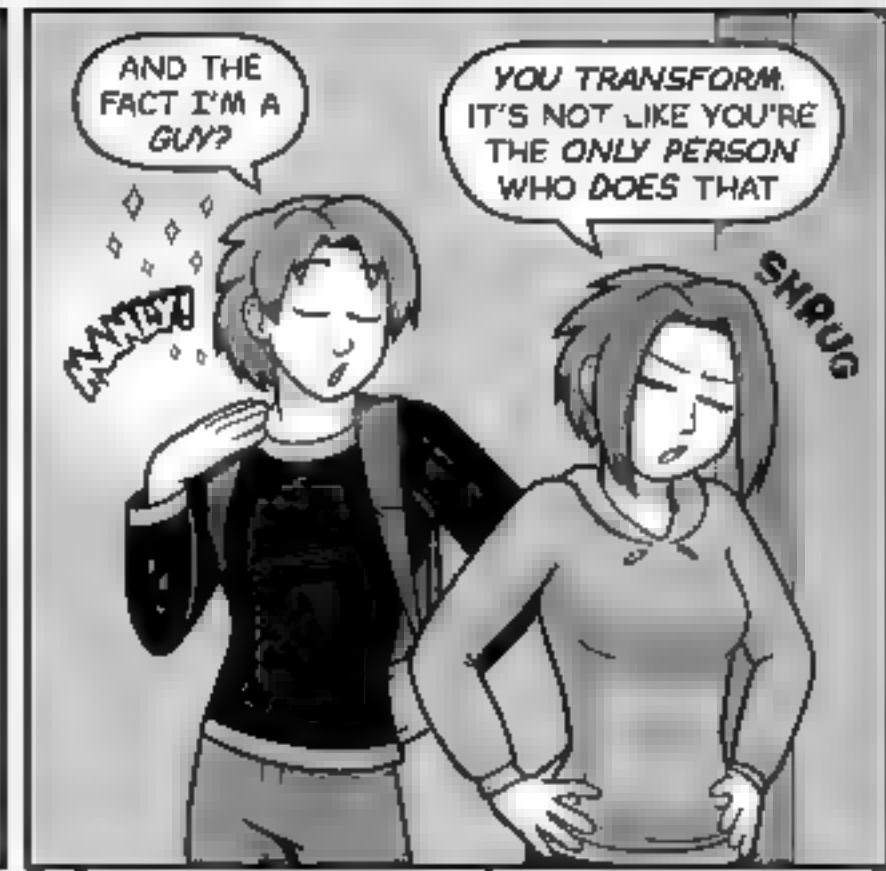
UH-HUH.

SO, HE'S A
GOOD GUY

THAT
LEAVES...
THE OTHER
POSSIBILITY

WE NEED TO TALK.





HER EVIDENCE IS AS FLIMSY AS A HOUSE MADE OF BENDY STRAWS, BUT SHE'S RIGHT, AND I DON'T HAVE A POKER FACE!

DANG IT I NEED A SECRET IDENTITY FORM THAT'S JUST ME BUT GOOD AT LYING...

ASHLEY'S AS BAD A LIAR AS YOU, AND SHE'S BEEN WEIRDLY QUIET ABOUT YOUR FIRST TWO DATES...

EGGS ARE TINY ROCKS.

I SEE!

BUT AT LEAST SHE WAS SMILING AFTER THE FIRST ONE.

YOU'VE ALREADY DECIDED I'M CHEERLEADRA.

I CAN'T CONVINCE YOU OTHERWISE.

BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS. ASHLEY WILL BE SAFE AT THIS PARTY NOT ONLY IS THERE NO CHANCE OF A REPEAT OF OUR SECOND DATE...

WE'RE HAVING THE PARTY AT THE HOUSE OF SOMEONE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

AND THERE'LL BE FIVE SKILLED MARTIAL ARTISTS THERE INCLUDING MYSELF, AND THAT GUY WHO KICKED A FIRE PERSON INTO A RIVER.

THAT GUY WHO FOUGHT SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH CHEERLEADRA?

ERK!
COINCIDENCE!

SO LEGIT LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CROOKED?

HUH?

SERIOUSLY? WHO'D GET INTO LAW ENFORCEMENT IF THEY DIDN'T WANT TO HELP PEOPLE?

WHOEVER OWNS THE HOUSE, ARE THEY CORRUPT AND PHONY, OR ARE THEY ACTUALLY A GOOD COP OR WHATEVER?

THIS ISN'T SOME MOVIE WITH A LAZY PLOT TWIST

• • •

I'D SAY YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THIS NAIVE BUT I'VE SEEN YOU LYING.

N-NO YOU HAVEN'T! AND WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

-SIGH-



FORGET ABOUT IT. I GUESS THIS IS THE BEST ANSWER I'M GOING TO GET OUT OF YOU

YOU CARE A LOT ABOUT ASHLEY, DON'T YOU?

OF COURSE I DO! SHE'S MY FRIEND! AND... AND SHE'S A GOOD GIRL! AND SHE'S NOT A PHONY, AT LEAST WHEN SHE'S NOT COVERING FOR YOU!

SHE EVEN HELPED ME QUIT SMOKING.



ASHLEY HELPED YOU QUIT SMOKING? HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? ARE YOU EVEN EIGHTEEN?

YES, BUT I STARTED SMOKING WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN.

-GASP-

YEAH, YEAH, BOY SCOUT BUT RELAX. ASHLEY HELPED ME QUIT IT'S HOW WE MET



HOW DO YOU MEET SOMEONE BY HELPING THEM QUIT SMOKING?

I WAS ALL PISSED OFF FROM WITHDRAWAL WHEN I BUMPED INTO HER IN THE HALLWAY IT WAS MY FAULT, BUT I SHOUTED AT HER ANYWAY

I STARTED TO STORM OFF WHEN SHE SHOUTED AT ME TO WAIT

I THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO SNAP AT ME, AND I FELT LIKE SNAPPING BACK. BUT SHE ASKED ME IF I WAS OKAY



I WAS SO SURPRISED THAT I COOLED OFF ENOUGH TO TELL HER I WAS TRYING TO QUIT SMOKING. THAT'S WHEN SHE OFFERED TO HELP

THAT .

...IS SO BADASS.



IT WAS STUPID. I
WAS A STRANGER
GOING THROUGH
WITHDRAWAL! I
COULD HAVE BEEN
DANGEROUS!

SHE
DOESN'T
THINK THESE
THINGS
THROUGH!

SHE KNEW
THE DANGER.

SHE SAW SOMEONE
WHO NEEDED HELP,
AND SHE COULDN'T
IGNORE IT

THAT'S THE SORT OF
PERSON ASHLEY IS.

A HERO.

OH MY GOD
YOU ARE BOTH
SUCH DORKS

TO RECOGNIZE
A STRANGER WHO
YELLED AT HER WAS
IN PAIN, AND TO
OFFER SOMETHING
THAT BIG?

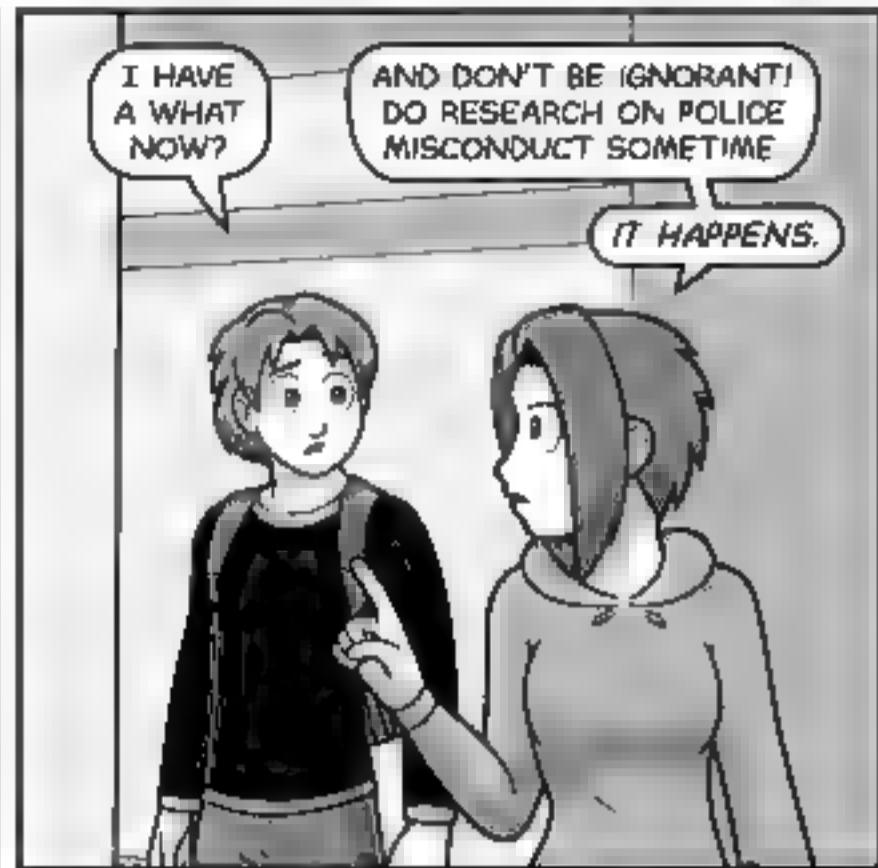
I MEAN... WOW

I LOVE HER.

OOO

OOO

...DID I SAY THAT
OUT LOUD?



Next story comic Monday
(My apologies! Some writing to sort out)

OH CARP IT'S SATURDAY Y'ALL

THIS IS IT.
TODAY'S THE
DAY I MEET
ASHLEY

THE GIRL ELLIOT
WOULD RATHER DATE
THAN SARAH, THE
PERFECT WOMAN.

STOP THAT HE
THINKS OF HER LIKE
A SISTER, AND WHO
WOULDN'T WANT
SARAH AS A SISTER?

NOBODY,
THAT'S WHO.

UNLESS
THEY WANT TO
DATE HER

THIS GOT
COMPLICATED
QUICKLY

ALL I REALLY KNOW
ABOUT ASHLEY IS
THAT SHE'S "NICE"
WHATEVER THAT
ACTUALLY MEANS...

OH, YOU LIKE
SQUIRRELS? THAT'S
ADORABLE.

... SHE KICKED A
SOCCER BALL AT A
GRIFFIN'S FACE.

HAHA
HA!

RIGHT
IN THE
FACE!

...NANASE'S
SUSPICIOUS
OF HER...

ME?
EVIL?

OH HO
HO HO!..

... AND SHE'S A
DRAGON-POWERED
WIZARD...

TREMBLE
BEFORE MY
POWER!

NO NO NO. SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY REAL POWER YET GRACE, AND NANASE SAID SHE'S A GOODY-TWO-SHOES.

OF COURSE, EVEN IF HER SHOES ARE GOOD, THERE'S THE OTHER THING.

BUT SO ARE PALADINS IN ROLEPLAYING GAMES, AND I'VE HEARD A THING OR TWO ABOUT THEM AT THE COMIC SHOP

THOUGH A LOT OF THAT WAS "THEY WON'T LET MY THIEF CHARACTER STEAL THINGS"

...I'M NOT SAYING NEVER TELL ASHLEY ABOUT URYUOMS.

I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT, BUT I KNOW IT'S INEVITABLE IF SHE'S GOING TO LEARN MAGIC WITH YOU

I'M JUST SAYING, FOR NOW, AT YOUR FIRST LITTLE GET-TOGETHER.

BE VAGUE IF SHE ASKS ABOUT THIS, OR ANYTHING ELSE TO DO WITH URYUOMS, OKAY?

UM...

BE VAGUE IF YOU DO ANYTHING WITH YOUR ABILITIES. YES.

ARTHUR MADE HER SOUND PRETTY TIM'D BEST TO TAKE THINGS SLOW

SO START ANY POTENTIAL FRIENDSHIP WITH HIDING WHO I REALLY AM.

YAAAAAAAAY

BIZZ

BIZZ

A TEXT MESSAGE?



SARAH!

HER DATE LAST NIGHT! SAM JUST WANTING TO BE FRIENDS!

SOUNDS LIKE TEDD LET HER IN. OKAY BE READY TO HUG AND SUPPORT AND...

...AND WHAT IF SAM MENTIONED ME? I TOLD SAM TO TALK TO SARAH ABOUT HIS FEELINGS! WHAT IF SARAH DOESN'T WANT A HUG? WHAT IF SHE WANTS TO THROW A COUCH AT ME?!

I'VE BEEN SO FOCUSED ON HOW TERRIFYING AND NOT-SARAH ASHLEY IS THAT I FORGOT ABOUT SARAH!

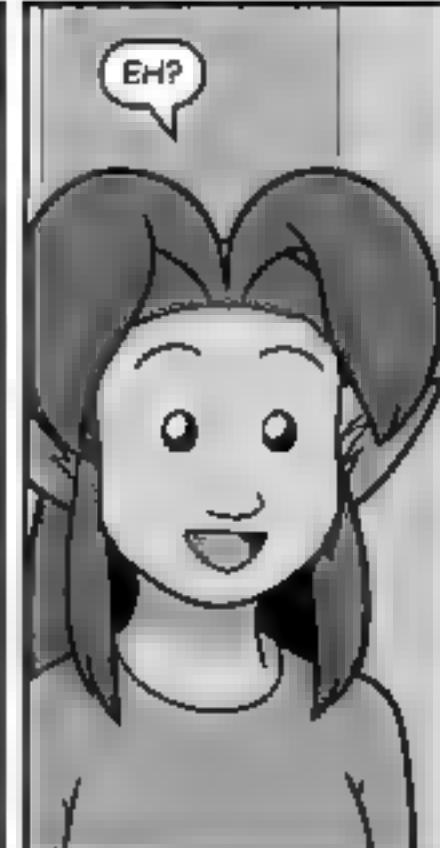


UM, HI? HOW ARE YOU?

AWESOME!

I HAD THE BEST DATE LAST NIGHT!

EH?



SO... YOU DOING OKAY ON THE WHOLE "RAGE AT THE WORLD" THING?

YEAH. I'M... I'M GOOD. GOOD ENOUGH.

I FOUND A LOT OF BAD STORIES ABOUT POLICE BUT I ALSO FOUND ONES WHERE THEY HELPED PEOPLE, WATCHED SOME BROOKLYN NINE-NINE, ATE SOME YOGURT...

ANYWAY, TODAY'S NOT ABOUT THAT TODAY'S ABOUT A PARTY AND MAYBE FUN MAGIC STUFF

ORRRR KEEPING MAGIC TO A MINIMUM.



YOU WORRIED ABOUT SCARING ASHLEY WITH TOO MUCH MAGIC STUFF?

SORT OF? I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'LL BE IN THE MOOD FOR MAGIC STUFF AFTER Y'KNOW... THAT... STUFF THAT HAPPENED...

...BUT IF SHE IS, SHE REALLY LIKES MAGIC AND TRANSFORMATION, ESPECIALLY TRANSFORMATION.

LIKE, "THE THOUGHT OF HER AND TEDD HANGING OUT IS ACTUALLY SORT OF SCARY" LIKES IT.



WHAT, YOU'RE WORRIED SHE'LL BE ATTRACTED TO TEDD?

WHAT? NO! BECAUSE OF ALL THE TRANSFORMATION IDEAS THEY'LL COME UP WITH!

OH, RIGHT OF COURSE THERE'S NO CHANCE OF UM...

-COUGH-



Soon, outside Ash ey's house .



IT'S NOT THAT I THINK ASHLEY'S EVIL, IT'S JUST... SHE BAFFLED ME. I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE COULD SEE WHAT SHE SAW AND JUST BE LIKE "OH, YOU'LL TELL ME IF I NEED TO KNOW SOMETHING"

YEAH, LIKE COPING WITH THE WEIRDNESS BY THINKING OF STORIES IN WHICH SIMILAR THINGS HAPPEN?

IT COULD'VE GIVEN HER A WAY TO PROCESS EVERYTHING WHILE ALSO MAKING HER OPEN TO THE IDEA OF PEOPLE KEEPING EACH OTHER'S MAGICAL SECRETS.

MAYBE, BUT THE CONCLUSION I GET FROM THOSE STORIES IS TO ALWAYS INSIST ON BEING TOLD EVERYTHING.

GENRE SAVVY?

SHE COULD BE GENRE SAVVY

LIKE SECRET IDENTITIES AND SHARED SECRETS ARE PRETTY COMMON IN STORIES WITH POWERS AND MAGIC AND JUNK

OH, TOTALLY HALF OF ALL THE PROBLEMS IN THOSE STORIES COULD BE SOLVED WITH BETTER COMMUNICATION.

SOOOOOOO... YOUR DATE WITH LUKE LAST NIGHT! HOW'D IT GO? HOW'D IT GO?

FIRST, LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING.

IS PART OF YOUR INTEREST DUE TO HAVING A THING FOR MALE-MALE RELATIONSHIPS, AND BEING SO EAGER TO HEAR ABOUT THEM THAT YOU DON'T REALIZE YOUR OWN RUDENESS AND INSENSITIVITY?

UH...

BECAUSE I LOVE THE ATTENTION AND AM EAGER TO TALK ABOUT ALL SORTS OF STUFF WITH YOU

NOTED! LET'S GAB.

SO, UM... DO YOU HAVE A DESIGNATED COFFEE MAKER FOR PARTIES, OR...

WHAT?

YOU KNOW FOR WHEN PEOPLE INEVITABLY DRINK TOO MUCH.

UH, WE... WE WEREN'T PLANNING ON HAVING ANY ALCOHOL...

WHAT REALLY?

YEAH.
-SIGH-

YOU WERE EXPECTING ALCOHOL?

THAT'S... HAVE YOU BEEN TO PARTIES LIKE THAT BEFORE?

OH YEAH, A BUNCH OF TIMES BACK IN CALIFORNIA.

I DON'T WANT ANY BUT A BUNCH OF TEENS ON A SATURDAY WITH NO SUPERVISION? I FIGURED ON SOME DRINKING. HOPEFULLY NOT FROM YOU, BUT...

BUT... I MEAN... HOW DID THEY EVEN GET ALCOHOL? WAS THERE A SUMMER SPY CAMP FOR TEEN HOOLIGANS I MISSED?

I DUNNO. I WAS IN CHARGE OF COFFEE AND HERDING DRUNKS.

REALLY?
YOU'VE GOTTN ALCOHOL BEFORE?

NO SORT OF. THE ANSWER'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN YOU'D THINK.

I KNOW WAYS TO GET ALCOHOL, BUT I'M NOT SHARING THEM WITH IMPRESSIONABLE INNOCENTS

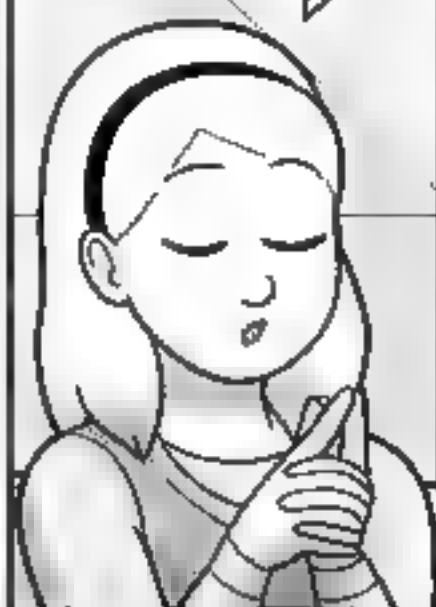
SERIOUSLY, THOUGH,
GOOD FOR YOU ON THE
NOT DRINKING THING!

SO DO YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, OR THE WILDLY INACCURATE VERSION WITH JS FIGHTING OFF CLOTHES-TEARING NINJAS?

HM...

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, BUT LET'S REVISIT THE NINJA VERSION LATER.

OKAY, SO EARLIER THIS WEEK, LUKE AND I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING BEYOND "DINNER AND A MOVIE" FOR OUR DATE, BUT THEN DIANE, SUSAN'S MAYBE-SISTER OR WHATEVER, SUGGESTING BOWLING.



OOH, BOWLING! THAT'S A GOOD ONE. BEST AS A DOUBLE DATE, THOUGH

YEAH, THAT WAY IT'S NOT ALWAYS YOU OR YOUR DATE'S TURN TO BOWL.

DANE ADMITTED TO THAT BEFORE THE DATE. ?

UH.. NO DURING THE DATE

DURING?



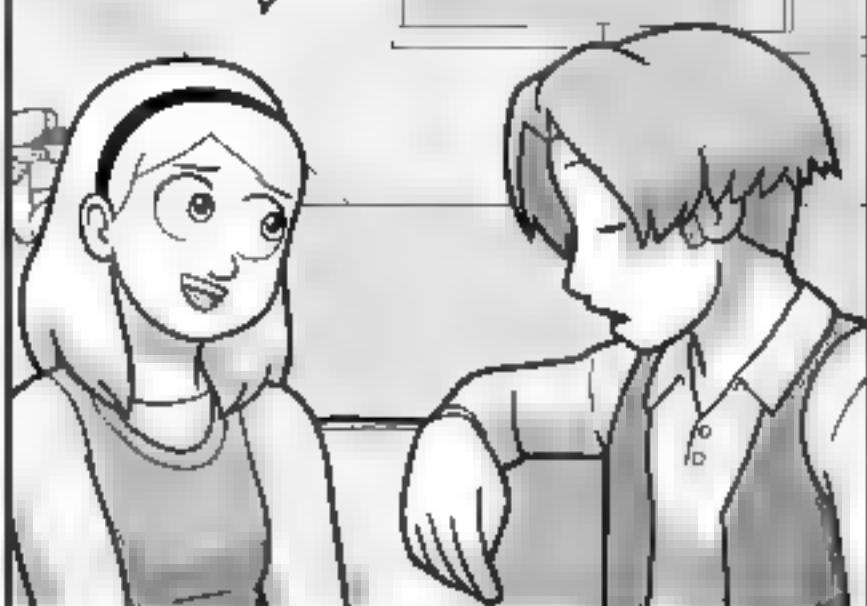
DIANE ADMITTED TO BEING USED TO DOUBLE DATES.



YEAH, SEE SHE HAD A BOWLING DATE. TOO, AND WE BOTH AGREED TO NOT BOTHER THE OTHER IF WE SAW EACH OTHER, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASY GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE PLACE AND ALL THE LANES.

YOU GUYS WOUND UP IN LANES RIGHT NEXT TO EACH OTHER, DIDN'T YOU

YEE-UP.



SEE? I CAN
BE WELCOMING
TO ASHLEY!

SHE'LL LOVE
SEEING A LITTLE FAIRY
ME, AND LOOK!

MY NEWEST
FAIRY POWER
LETS ME
GIVE THE
DOLLS NEW
OUTFITS!

AND YOU
CHOSE THAT
OUTFIT FOR
"WELCOMING
ASHLEY"?

WHAT?
YOU DON'T
THINK IT'S
COOL?



IT WAS WEIRD BEING RIGHT NEXT TO DIANE AND HER DATE, BUT IT WAS ALRIGHT. WE EVEN GOT A LITTLE COMPETITIVE FOR A BIT

BRING IT ON!

UM, YES! HA HA

WE HAD NO CHANCE I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY BOWLING DATES THEY'VE BEEN ON BUT I'M GUESSING A THOUSAND



BUT THEY SORT OF TOOK THE PRESSURE OFF I THINK THE OCCASIONAL BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN US HELPED KEEP THINGS RELAXED.

DIANE AND I EVEN WENT TO GET FOOD FOR ALL OF US TOGETHER WHICH WAS THE ONLY TIME SHE WEIRDDED ME OUT

JH, YEAH, SO... I NEVER SAW THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN DIANE AND SUSAN, BECAUSE DIANE WAS A JERK IN VERY NOT-SUSAN WAYS?

NOW THAT SHE'S NOT BEING A JERK, I CAN SEE IT, AND IT'S LIKE AN UNCANNY VALLEY SITUATION?



IT HELPS WHEN SHE'S DOING NON-SUSAN STUFF, LIKE BOWLING AND GETTING CLOSE WITH LUCY BUT SHE WAS AN EXTROVERTED DOPPEL-SUSAN AWAY FROM THE LANES



UM... OBVIOUSLY NOT A BIG DEAL BUT... "LUCY"?

YEP
DATING A GIRL

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT AN OUTGOING BISEXUAL DOPPEL-SUSAN THAT'S STRANGELY INTIMIDATING.



IN RETROSPECT, IT EXPLAINS A LOT ABOUT HER AND NANASE



I KNOW, RIGHT?!

Meanwhile, drinking shakes

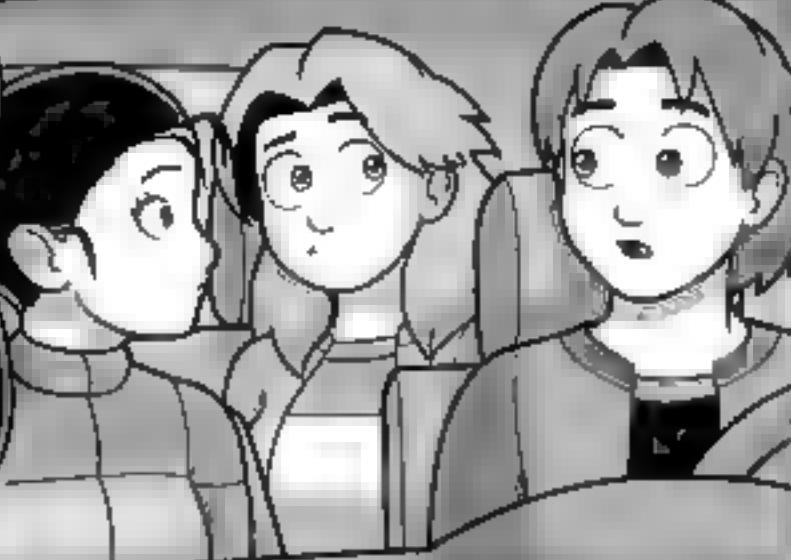


OH. UH...

BEFORE WE GO IN,
YOU SHOULD KNOW SOME-
THING ABOUT TEDD.

WHAT
ABOUT
HIM?

"HIM" IS SORT OF THE THING.
HE CAN TRANSFORM LIKE I
CAN, AND HE'S GENDERFLUID.
SO HE MIGHT BE A GIRL.



TEDD'S
BAKING A
CAKE

SHE IS
DEFINITELY
A GIRL.

WOW SO BOTH YOU
AND TEDD HAVE EXPERIENCE
BEING MALE AND FEMALE?

A-RIGHT!
OF COURSE.
SORRY

NO BIGGIE.



NOT AS SEXIST AS IT
SOUNDS. THAT'S JUST
HOW SHE ROLLS

AND ME. I'VE GOT
A BUNCH OF MEMORIES
OF BEING ELLIOT

ALSO EVERYBODY BUT ME
CHANGED SEXES AT GRACE'S
BIRTHDAY PARTY LAST YEAR.

ALL OF
YOU CAN DO
THAT?!

UH, ONLY TEDD AND
ME ON OUR OWN, BUT TEDD
HAS. UM... MAGICKY STUFF
FOR ALL SORTS OF TRANS-
FORMATION STUFF

ASHLEY?

ASHLEY

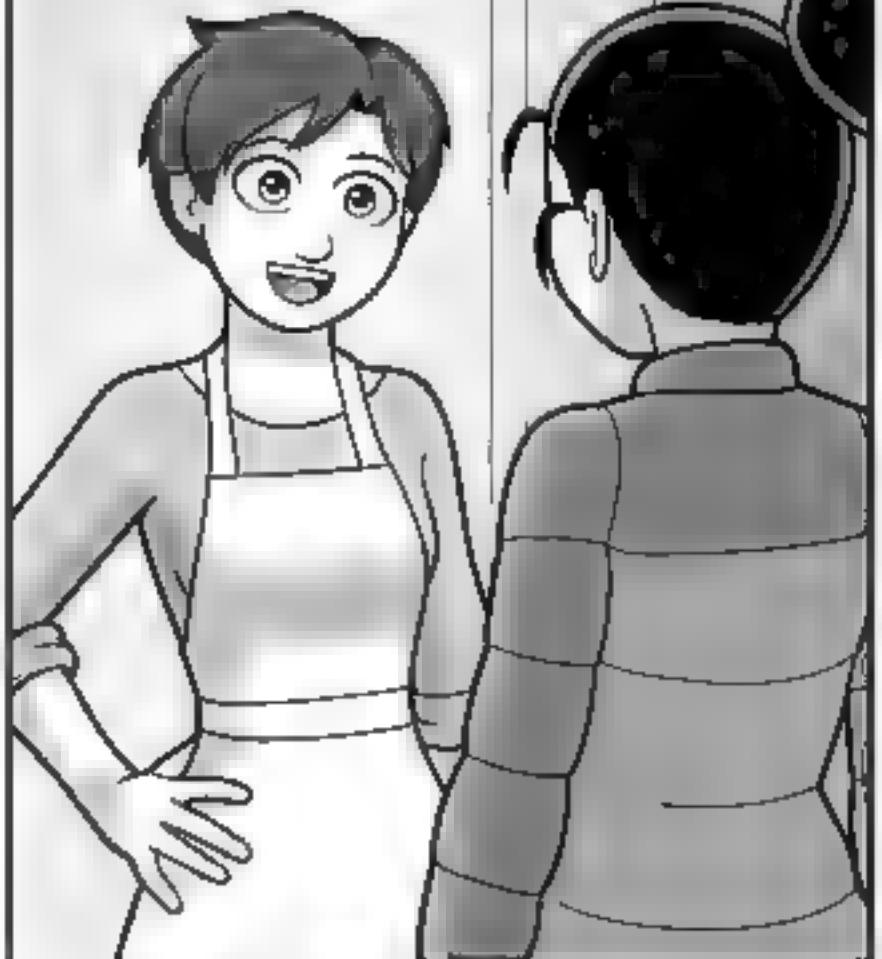


IN CASE YOU
CAN'T TELL, I'M
TEDD, AND I'M A
GIRL FOR NOW,
ANYWAY

THOUGH
PROBABLY UNTIL
TOMORROW

YES ELLIOT SAID
YOU MIGHT...

BE...? UHHH...



WH-WH-WHAT'S THAT???

MEREOYAWN

WHAT, YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN A
CAT BEFORE?

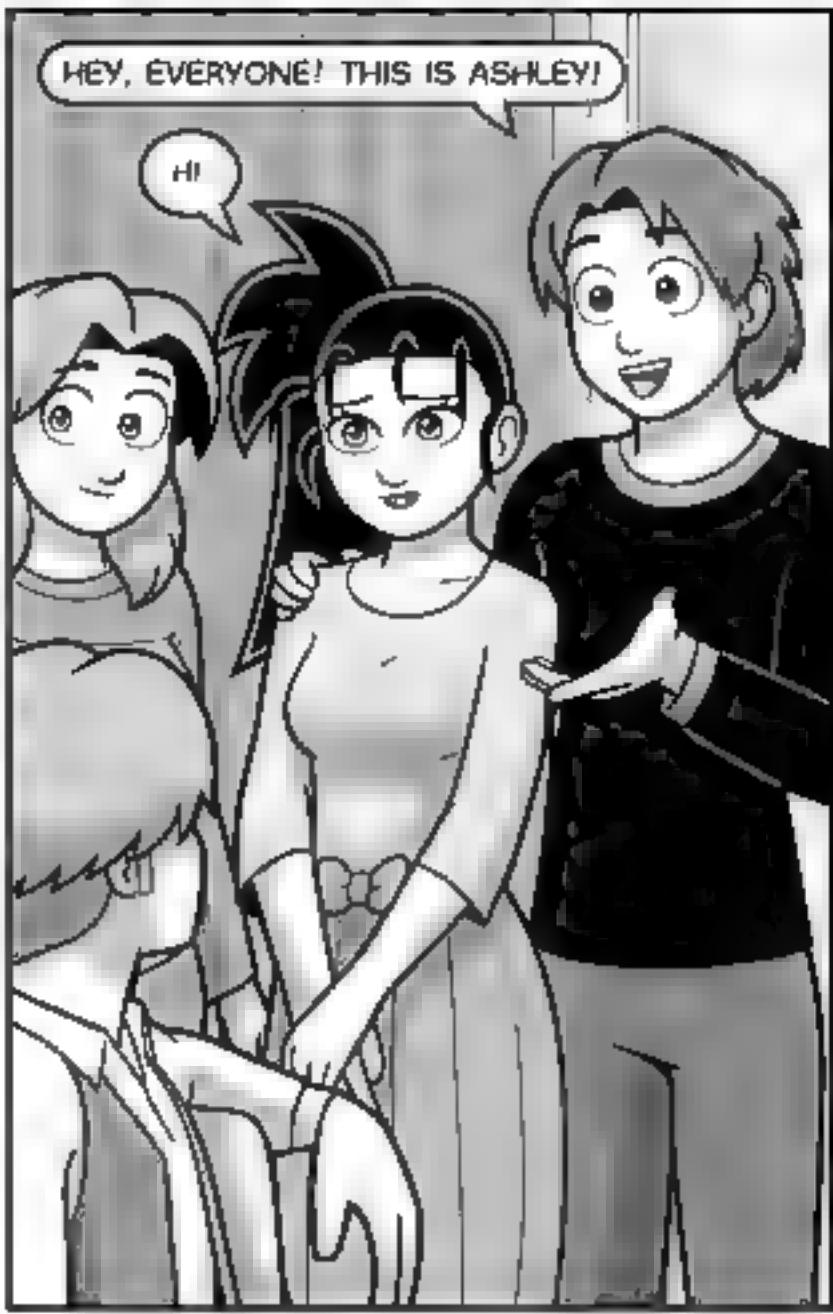
WAIT RIGHT

CATS DON'T
NORMALLY LOOK
LIKE THAT





...AND SO THE NINJAS TORE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE BOWLING ALLEY, EXPERTLY SHREDDING THE CLOTHING OF ANY ATTRACTIVE MEN PRESENT WHILE LEAVING THEM UNHARMED, UNTIL THEY MADE THEIR WAY TO US, AND...



NANASE KITSUNE?
SEXY MARTIAL
ARTIST MAGIC USER
YOU TALKED TO A
GRIFFIN WITH?

OH! RIGHT! I'M
SORRY, YOUR HAIR'S
REALLY DIFFERENT
NOW, AND.

WAS IT ANYWHERE
NEAR THAT LONG?

"SEXY"? REALLY?

THAT'S.. COMPLETELY
FAIR, ACTUALLY

AND NO,
IT WASN'T

OOH.. DID YOU MAGIC IT LONGER?

THE OPPOSITE, ACTUALLY

I'D BEEN USING MAGIC TO KEEP IT
LOOKING A CERTAIN WAY FOR A WHILE,
BUT MY NON-ENCHANTED HAIR WAS
STILL GROWING SOMEHOW

TEDD THINKS
THAT ACTUALLY
ACCELERATED
ITS GROWTH,
TOO, WHICH
SURE
WHATEVER.

IF HAIR CAN
GROW WHILE
IT'S LITERALLY
NOT GROWING,
WHY NOT GROW
FASTER?

ANYWAY, I
ONLY JUST
GOT AN
ACTUAL
HAIRCUT THIS
MORNING.

WHY DIDN'T YOU
JUST MAGIC UP A
NEW STYLE?

I DECIDED NOT BEING
CONSTANTLY ENCHANTED IS
PROBABLY A GOOD IDEA.

I ALSO
WANTED
TO SEE IF MY
MOM WOULD
ADMIT TO
KNOWING
ABOUT MAGIC
IF I SHOWED
EVIDENCE OF
HAVING MINE
BACK.

SHE DID
NOT

WHY DID YOU
KEEP YOUR HAIR
TRANSFORMED
FOR SO LONG?

A WHILE BACK, AN EMERGENCY

SAVING MY BACON

MADE ME USE TOO MUCH MAGIC ALL AT ONCE.
I "BURNED OUT", LOSING ACCESS TO MAGIC FOR
MONTHS, AND MY HAIR TURNED BLACK.

THAT CAN
HAPPEN?

YOU HAVE TO USE
WAY TOO MUCH
MAGIC, OR CERTAIN
SPELLS, BUT YES.

WHEN MY MAGIC
FINALLY CAME BACK,
SO DID MY RED HAIR,
AND I DIDN'T FEEL
LIKE EXPLAINING THE
SUDDEN CHANGE.

OH... WAS
IT HALF RED
BECAUSE YOUR
MAGIC HAD BEEN
COMING BACK?

LIKE YOUR HAIR
WAS FILLING UP
WITH MAGIC?

OR SOME
THING?

NO I DYED
IT RED AT ONE
POINT

WHEN IT
GREW OUT, IT
BECAME HALF
AND HALF

I'M PRETTY
SURE HAIR
DOESN'T FILL
UP WITH
MAGIC?

YOU'RE A LOT
MORE INQUISITIVE
THAN THE LAST
TIME I SAW YOU.

OH. UM...

I LIKE IT

THANKS?

SO, WAIT YOUR HAIR TURNED BLACK WHEN YOU LOST MAGIC?

"MYSTERIOUS" ...?

YOU REMEMBER, GRACE FROM FRESHMAN BIOLOGY?

YOU REMEMBER ELLEN, THAT I WAS "HOMESCHOoled"?

OH RIGHT

IS MAGIC WHERE MYSTERIOUS HAIR AND EYE COLORS COME FROM?!

"MYSTERIOUS" HAIR AND EYE COLORS ARE CONTRARY TO WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HUMAN HAIR AND GENETICS, AND DON'T MATCH WHAT OUR GENES SUGGEST OUR HAIR AND EYE COLORS SHOULD BE

MY RED HAIR IS "MYSTERIOUS" SO IS TEDD'S PURPLE HAIR, AND ELLEN'S GREEN HAIR.

PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD WILL JUST HAVE THEM WITH NO GENETIC EXPLANATION, SO SOMEONE WITH A PHD DEC'DED THEY WERE OFFICIALLY "MYSTERRRRRIIIOUUUSSSS"

AND MY FRIEND LIZ'S GREEN HAIR!

THOUGH IT CAN BE LESS OBVIOUS, LIKE A BRUNETTE WITH GENES FOR BLONDE HAIR.

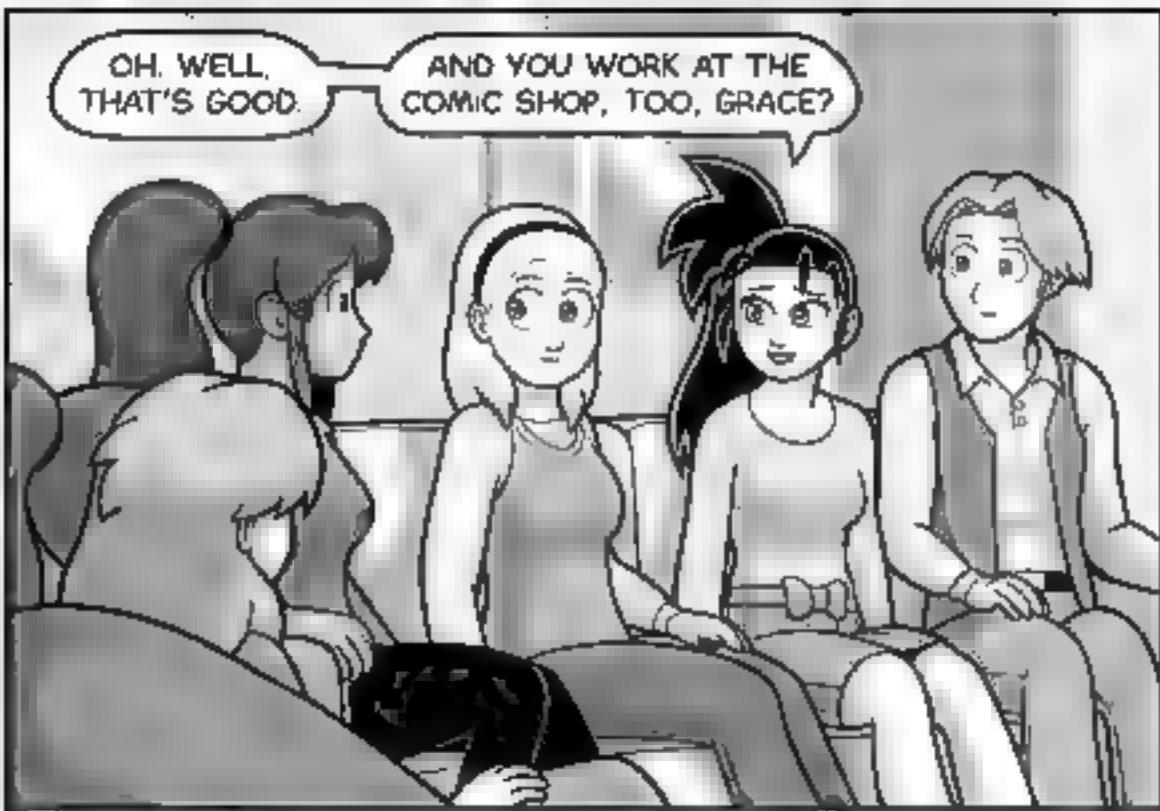
DARN IT, "HOMESCHOOL"! THAT'S NEAT INFORMATION!

STILL SHOULDN'T AIR QUOTE THAT

IT PROBABLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH MAGIC, BUT GOOD SCIENCE DOESN'T REACH CONCLUSIONS WITHOUT TESTING IT...

...AND THERE'S NO CORRELATION TO ANYTHING LIKE MAGIC POWER POTENTIAL THAT I'M AWARE OF





WAIT A MINUTE...
JUSTIN? DID YOU
FIGHT A FIRE
MONSTER WITH
CHEERLEADRA?

THAT FIRE
MONSTER WASN'T
SO HOT

LITERALLY

WE ALL KNOW ELLIOT
HAS CERTAIN IDEAS
ABOUT SUPER HEROINE
COSTUMES. YES!

NOT THAT THEY'RE
INACCURATE.

I DIDN'T CHOOSE
CHEERLEADRA'S
COSTUME!

IT'S DEFINITELY
BASED ON YOUR
SUBCONSCIOUS,
THOUGH.

I DIDN'T
CHOOSE
THE NAME,
EITHER.

THE WAY
YOU KICKED IT
YOU MUST
HAVE SUPER
STRENGTH!

I'M PRETTY
SWOLE, SURE BUT
I'VE GOT AN ABILITY
THAT AMPLIFIES MY
ATTACKS.

LIKE A...
SPELL?

MAYBE? I THINK IT'S MORE
AN ANIME MARTIAL ARTS
ABILITY I STUMBLED ON, BUT
I GUESS THAT'S MAGIC?

ANIME MARTIAL
ARTS? LIKE RANMA
ONE-HALF?!

I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY
WATCHED THAT

BUT YES,
EXACTLY
THAT

FIRSTLY, I HAVE WATCHED RANMA ONE HALF (WELL READ THE MANGA), AND NO, THERE WASN'T ENOUGH MERGING OF VARIOUS INNOCUOUS THINGS WITH MARTIAL ARTS FOR IT TO BE THE BEST COMPARISON.

SECONDLY HOW ARE YOU A RANMA ONE HALF FAN AND NOT TURNED BALLET SOCCER INTO A MARTIAL ART?

IT WAS MORE UNWITTINGLY UNLOCKING LATENT MAGIC TALENT WITH SPECIALIZED MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING. WHICH IS MORE DRAGON BALL TERRITORY

THAT IS LEGITIMATELY WHAT ANYONE IN YOUR POSITION WOULD REASONABLY DO.

HEHE SO ARE YOU ALL MARTIAL ARTISTS?

BAD. I DON'T EVEN LIFT

WHICH I'M NOT SURE MARTIAL ARTISTS DO.

BECAUSE I'M NOT ONE.

I AM TREMENDOUSLY WEAK. IT'S SOMETHING I SERIOUSLY NEED TO WORK ON.

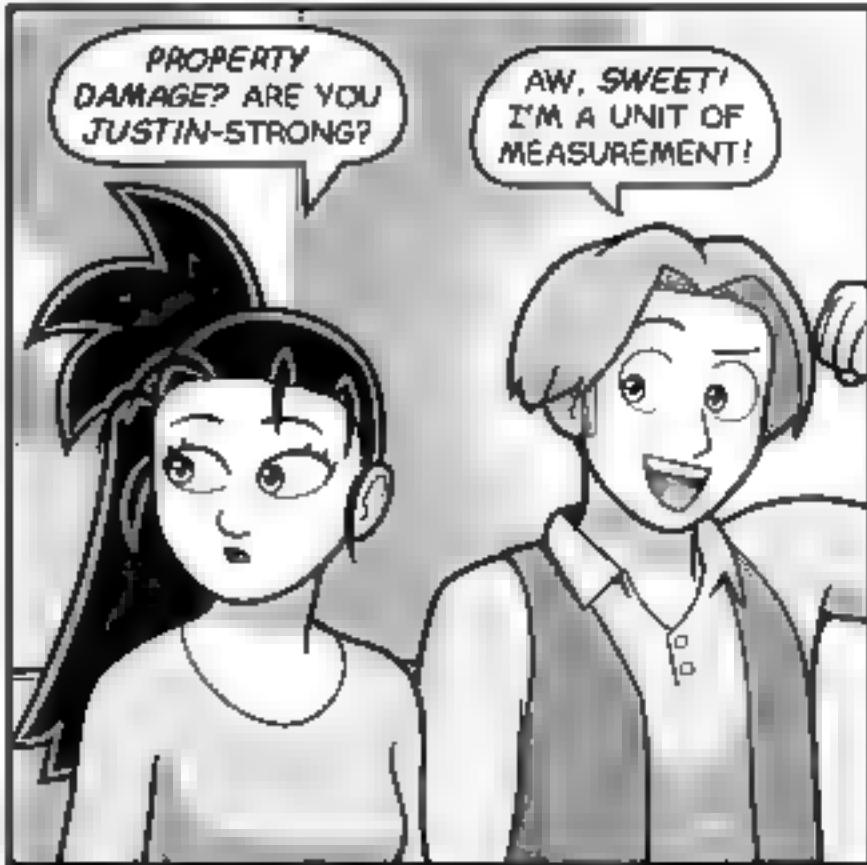
I COULD HELP YOU GET STARTED WITH AN EXERCISE ROUTINE

NO THAT'S TERRIFYING I DON'T WANNA

I'M A MARTIAL ARTIST!

I HAVEN'T MARTIAL ARTED OUTSIDE OF TRAINING, BUT KNOWING MY LUCK, IT'LL HAPPEN EVENTUALLY

I WORRY ABOUT THE PROPERTY DAMAGE



I DO... SOMETHING ELSE
TO FLY I WISH I COULD
TURN INTO A BIRD.

IT WOULD BE LIKE WHEN
THEY TRANSFORMED IN THE
SWORD IN THE STONE

'GASP'

I LOVE
THAT
MOVIE!

YOU.. ME TOO!

IT'S SO
GOOD!

BUT SAD, TOO!
THAT SCENE
WHERE THEY'RE
SQUIRRELS?

OH MY GOD THAT
SQUIRREL WHO FELL IN
LOVE WITH ARTHUR?!

SUCH A GOOD
SQUIRREL!

AND SHE WAS SUCH
A GOOD SQUIRREL!

THEY SHOULD'VE
MADE IT WORK!

THEY SHOULD'VE MADE A
RELATIONSHIP WORK WITH A
TWELVE YEAR OLD FUTURE
KING OF CAMELOT AND A
SQUIRREL?

THEY LIVE IN A
WORLD OF MAGIC AND
WONDERMENT, SARAH!

MAGIC COULD HAVE TOTALLY
MADE A SQUIRREL QUEEN OF
CAMELOT WORK!

ANYWAY, I CAN'T TURN INTO A FISH OR A BIRD BUT I CAN TOTALLY TURN INTO A SQUIRREL!

YOU CAN?! THAT'S AMAZING! CAN YOU DO THAT BECAUSE YOU REALLY LIKE SQUIRRELS?

THAT BRINGS UP AN INTERESTING THING ABOUT

I'M PART SQUIRREL!

UH...

YOU ARE?! -GASP- ARE YOU FROM THE SAME PLACE AS THE GRIFFINS? A MYTHICAL SQUIRREL GIRL?

NO! I'M ACTUALLY AN ALIEN-ALIEN-HUMAN-SQUIRREL HYBRID! I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE ALIENS THOUGH.

THAT'S AMAZING! WAIT, I'M SORRY! I DON'T KNOW HOW TRAGIC YOUR PAST IS!

SUPER TRAGIC! BUT IT'S OKAY! I'M JUST SO HAPPY I DON'T HAVE TO HIDE THIS FROM YOU!

YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING!

YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING! WANNA SEE ME TURN INTO A SQUIRREL?

DEFINITELY!

SWEET! COME ON, I'LL SHOW YOU OVER BY THE MIRROR!

AWESOME!

SO I GUESS THEY'RE FRIENDS NOW

DARE I SUGGEST
WE WATCH LEGALLY
BLONDE?



I'D BETTER PICK
SOMETHING SUSAN'S
ALREADY DRIFTED OVER
TO THE SCIENCE
FICTION SECTION.

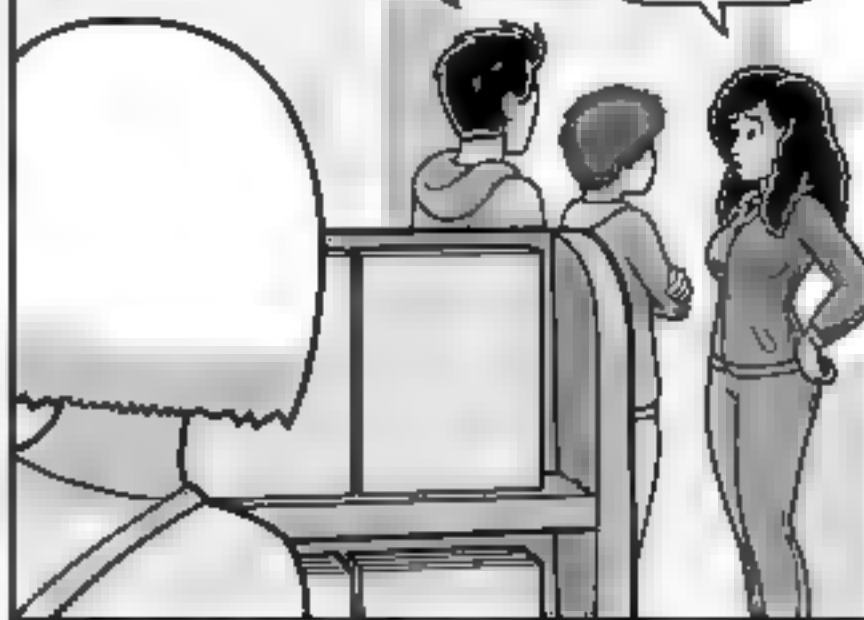
I THOUGHT YOU
WERE JOKING!

OH NO.



WHY WOULD ANYONE
JOKE ABOUT WANTING TO SEE
HERCULES IN NEW YORK?

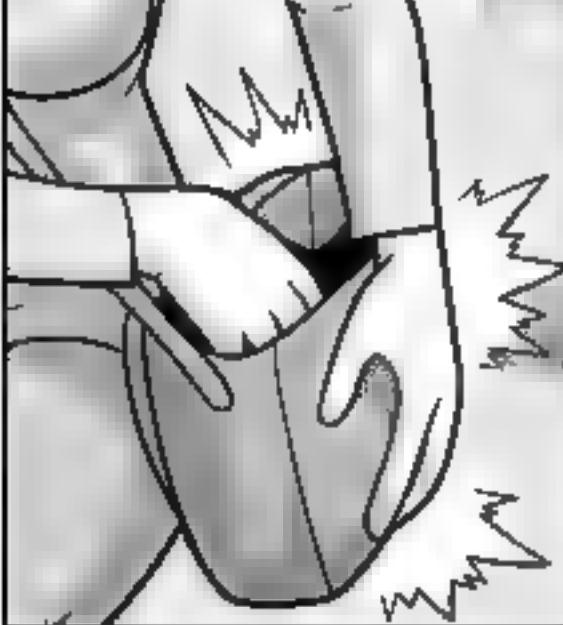
BECAUSE IT'S
HERCULES IN
NEW YORK!



QUACK!



PURSE!



ADORN!



STEALTH MODE



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

EEEE--
SHHH



THAT'S MY SISTER RHEA AND TWO OF HER ROOMMATES OVER BY THE DOOR!

OH, YOU HAVEN'T EXPLAINED YOUR CONVOLUTED EXTENDED BIOLOGICAL FAMILY SITUATION YET, AND IT'S DIFFICULT TO HIDE OUR RESEMBLANCE IF SHE SEES US SIDE-BY-SIDE

YOU PLANNED FOR THIS POSSIBILITY BY STORING A DISGUISE IN YOUR PURSE

IT FEELS WEIRD THAT YOU JUST GOT THAT



I KNOW THAT FEELING. ARE YOU ALSO HIDING BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T TOLD HER YOU'RE DATING A GIRL?

WHAT? NO. I TOLD HER AND MY PARENTS THE SAME DAY I GOT TOGETHER WITH LUCY

THAT I HAVE TO EXPLAIN? THAT SEEKS LIKE IT SHOULD BE SELF-EXPLANATORY



I DON'T KEEP SECRETS FROM MY FAMILY NOT ABOUT IMPORTANT STUFF. NOT NORMALLY I WANT TO TELL THEM ABOUT YOU AND... EVERYTHING BUT I'M NOT READY

I KNOW THAT FEELING TOO. I HAVEN'T TOLD MY MOTHER ANYTHING I HAVEN'T EVEN TALKED TO MY FRIENDS ABOUT IT YET

I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHERE I'D BEGIN. OR IF THERE'S STUFF I SHOULD LEAVE OUT FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY

YOU WHAT



I WHAT . . . WHAT?

YOU HAVEN'T TALKED
TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENED AT THE
MALL YET?



YOUR FRIENDS WHO ALREADY KNOW ABOUT,
AND CAN DO, SPOOKY STUFF THEMSELVES?

YOU OF ALL
PEOPLE SHOULD
GET THAT

I DO, BUT THEY KNOW
YOU WERE AT THE MALL
WHEN ALL THAT STUFF
HAPPENED. RIGHT? THAT
YOU GOT INVOLVED?

EVEN IF IT'S NOT EVERYTHING YET DON'T YOU
THINK YOU SHOULD TELL THEM SOMETHING?

MAYBE BUT I HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN SEEING
THEM OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL SINCE THEN THEY
INVITED ME TO A PARTY TODAY BUT THEY
DON'T NEED ME BRINGING IT DOWN.

A PARTY

YES?

YOUR FRIENDS ARE
HAVING A PARTY, AND YOU'RE
OUT RENTING A MOVIE WITH
YOUR AUNT?!



NO THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

"WE'RE"!?

OH, LIKE IT'S
SHOCKING I WOULD
GO SOMEWHERE
UNINVITED.



DIANE THIS IS A
PARTY WHERE PEOPLE
ARE SUPPOSED TO
FEEL FREE TO TALK
ABOUT YOU KNOW

I DON'T, ACTUALLY?
THERE ARE THINGS
I WOULD GUESS,
BUT GIVEN WHAT I
ASSUME ABOUT THE
GUEST LIST

NOT EVEN GOING TO GUESS
WHERE YOUR MIND WENT
THERE. MAGIC STUFF

OH, GEE,
MAGIC STUFF!
WOULDN'T WANT
ME HEARING
ABOUT THAT!

I MEAN, I KNOW
NANASE AND ELLEN
HAVE MAGIC

IT'S OBVIOUS ELLEN ISN'T
SIMPLY "ELLIOT'S SISTER"

THAT FURRY GIRL WITH
THREE TAILS AT NEW YEARS
WAS CLEARLY GRACE...

I ALREADY
KNOW ELLIOT'S
CHEERLEADERA...

AND WHEN YOU FINALLY
TELL THEM EVERYTHING
ABOUT THE MALL YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO TELL
THEM MY SECRET

IS THERE
SERIOUSLY ANY
REASON TO KEEP
ME OUT OF THE
LOOP AT THIS
POINT?

BESIDES, YOU NEED
TO STOP AVOIDING YOUR
FRIENDS. AND I WAS THERE
WITH YOU AT THE MALL

OH CRAP, SORRY, I
FORGOT ABOUT YOUR
PHYSICAL CONTACT--

THING?

IF WE GO TOGETHER, AND
YOU DECIDE TO OPEN UP, YOU
WON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

THREE TAILS

THREE TAILS

OKAY MAYBE NOT THE "BEST" DATE. THE BEST DATE WOULD BE THAT CARPET RIDE FROM ALADDIN MINUS ALL THE LYING AND FEAR OF HEIGHTS. BUT IT WAS A DATE.

NO "MAYBE DATE", NO "IS HE INTO ME"...

ACTUAL FACTUAL DATE

WHICH I CANNOT ELABORATE ON BECAUSE I AM A GENTLEWOMAN, BUT...

YOU KNOW WHAT? IMAGINE THE MAGIC CARPET RIDE THAT'S GOOD.

BUT SAM DIDN'T WANT TO DATE SARAH WITHOUT TELLING HER HE'S TRANS. BUT HE DIDN'T WANT TO TELL ANYONE HE'S TRANS. BUT NOW SARAH'S SAYING IT WAS DEFINITELY A DATE. BUT

BRAIN/ WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

This is somewhat tangential, but I recommend counseling. You've been through a lot.

OH, THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY!

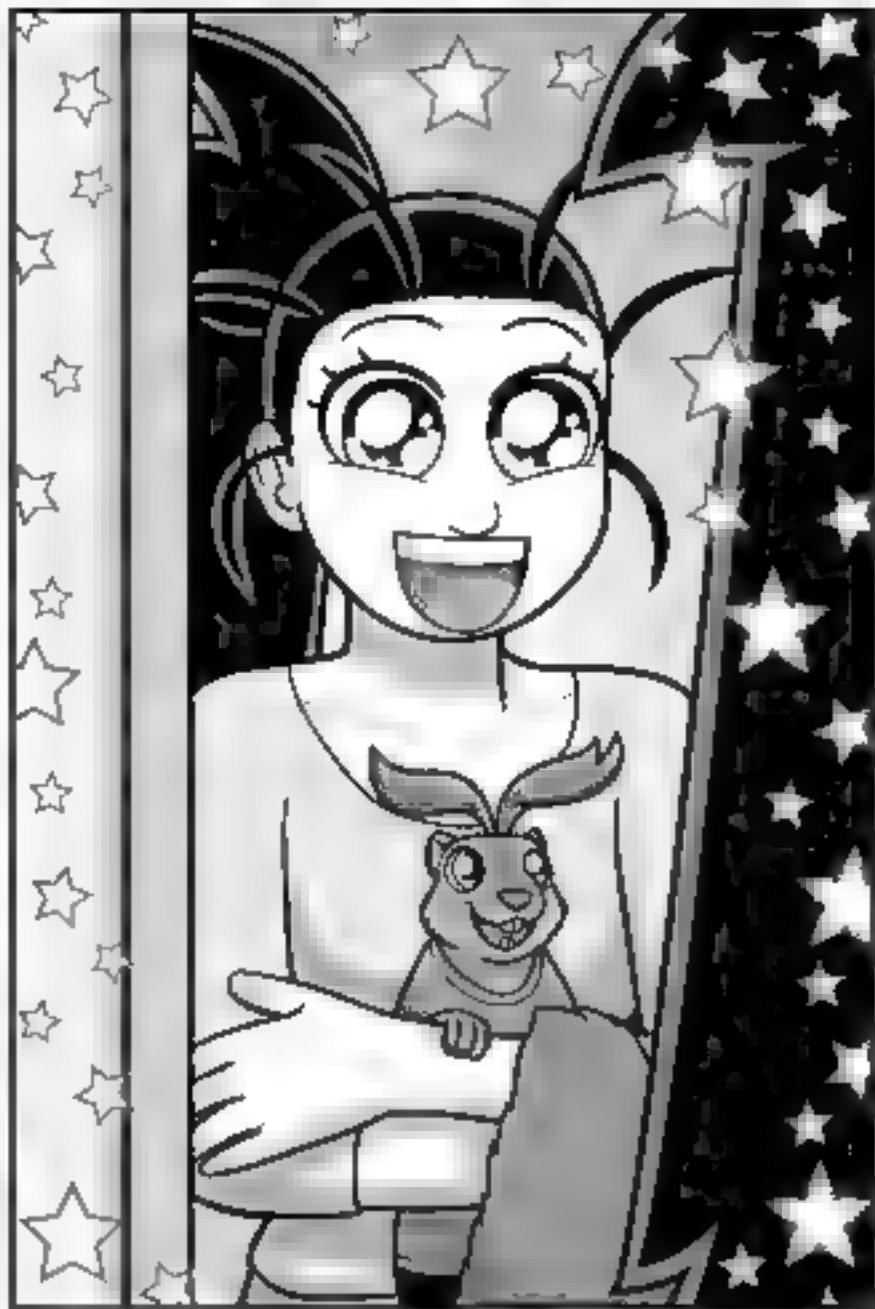
GRACE? ARE YOU OKAY?

FINE FINE JUST... FEELING AWKWARD.

WORRIED ABOUT MEETING ASHLEY?

YES. ASHLEY YES.

I'VE HEARD SHE'S THE DEVIL, YOU KNOW



IT'S A SHAME I CAN'T SHOW OFF MY SPELL...

WHAT IS YOUR SPELL AGAIN, EXACTLY? A "WHAT IF" SIMULATION?

IN SOME WAYS, LIKE A DECK THAT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS "HOLOGRAPHIC"?

IT'S A SIMULATION OF FROZEN TIME

RIGHT, AND THEN YOU CAN PLAY OUT "WHAT IF" SCENARIOS, SO YOU CAN SEE WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF YOU TRY SOMETHING!

NO, I CAN IMAGINE STUFF HAPPENING AND IT'LL SEEM LIKE IT'S HAPPENING BUT IT WON'T PREDICT ANYTHING.

STUFF THAT'S FROZEN WILL BE ACCURATE, BUT ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST MY IMAGINATION.

IF I ASKED TIME STOP YOU A QUESTION, AT BEST, I'D JUST IMAGINE YOU REACTING HOW I'D EXPECT YOU TO REACT

OH, SO LESS PREDICTIVE "WHAT IF" MAGIC, AND MORE A SNAPSHOT OF THAT MOMENT IN WHICH YOU CAN MESS AROUND WITH THE SNAPSHOT?

THAT SOUNDS RIGHT?

THEN I REMAIN INCREDIBLY JEALOUS.

THAT WAS JUST... INCREDIBLE! IT'S AMAZING YOU CAN SHRINK AND CHANGE THAT MUCH!

EVEN YOUR CLOTHES CHANGED TO FIT YOUR SQUIRRELLY FORM!

YEAH, THAT SURPRISED ME. I THOUGHT I'D SHRINK OUT OF THEM GOING FULL SQUIRREL.

YOU WHAT?



COOL AND CONFIDENT? I'M NOT
COOL AND CONFIDENT I JUST DON'T
CARE ABOUT THIS ONE THING

SILENCE, YOU
FOOL! SHE
DOESN'T KNOW
THAT I EXUDE
CONFIDENCE!

BUT

EXUDE!

HEY IT'S ALL
GOOD! DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
IT!

WHAT AM I
EVEN DOING
WITH MY
HANDS HOW
DO PEOPLE
CONFIDENT

IT'S JUST I WOULD BE WAY
TOO EMBARRASSED BY SOME
THING LIKE THAT I MEAN. I'VE
FANTASIZED ABOUT THAT SORT
OF THING HAPPENING TO ME,
AND I JUST SAID THAT
OUT LOUD

STICK A REFUSE STICKER
ON ME, I'M DONE.

WHAT LIKE A ROMANCE FANTASY
ABOUT BEING EMBARRASSED?

THAT IS AN ADORABLY CHARITABLE
WAY OF PUTTING IT BUT YES.
JUST PUT ME BY THE CURB.

MAKES SENSE

WHAT? W-WHAT
MAKES SENSE?

THAT I'M TRASH?

NO, THE
EMBARRASSMENT
THING! BLUSHING,
ELEVATED HEART
RATE

THE WAY OUR MINDS
OVERSIMPLIFY AND
CONNECT STUFF, IT MAKES
SENSE THAT SOMEONE
COULD HAVE FANTASIES
ABOUT THAT

SPLINK

BUT ACTUAL
EMBARRASSMENT
FEELS AWFUL.

AS I'VE BEEN
DEMONSTRATING

IT'S WEIRD TO
HAVE FANTASIES
ABOUT IT

FANTASIES ARE A SAFE PLACE!
THE LACK OF REAL WORLD
CONSEQUENCES CAN FILTER OUT
THE NEGATIVE FEELINGS YOU'D
HAVE IF IT REALLY HAPPENED

NOT EVERYONE'S GOING TO
FANTASIZE ABOUT THE SAME STUFF,
BUT FANTASIES RESULTING FROM
SUBCONSCIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AND
FILTERING OUT NEGATIVE STUFF?

LIKE HOW I CAN THROW FIRE
AT TURTLES IN VIDEO GAMES
AND IT'S TOTALLY FINE!

THAT'S NOT
WEIRD. THAT'S
NORMAL.

I'VE... BEEN
TOLD THAT I
SHOULDN'T
APOLOGIZE FOR
BEING WEIRD
BEFORE, BUT...

I CAN'T
REMEMBER
BEING TOLD
I'M NOT
WEIRD

I GUESS A LOT OF
THINGS SEEM WEIRD
WHEN YOU DON'T BREAK
THEM DOWN INTO
SIMPLER COMPONENTS
LIKE THAT

LIKE SOCCER!

SOCCER?

YEAH! IMAGINE WATCHING
IT WITHOUT KNOWING IT WAS
A GAME. IT'D BE LIKE "WHAT ARE
THEY EVEN DOING? WHAT IS THIS
SUPPOSED TO ACCOMPLISH?"

"IS THIS SOME
FORM OF POLITICAL
DEBATE?"

RIGHT?!

SO I'M NO WEIRDER
THAN SOCCER.

EXACTLY!

THANK
YOU

THERE'S NO WAY
ANYONE COULD REALLY
TIME STOP THE WHOLE
UNIVERSE

PANDORA
SAID THE
SAME
THING.

NO NO NO, NOT THE
WHOLE UNIVERSE! NOT
EVEN A REAL TIME STOP!

THE EFFECT COULD
BE A LOCALIZED SPACE-
TIME ANOMALY!



SO THERE'S NO CHANCE OF CASTING ANY OF THESE BY ACCIDENT?

WELL, I MEAN, THERE'S A CHANCE, BUT WHAT ARE THE ODDS OF ANYONE ACCIDENTALLY SAYING ANY OF THOSE PHRASES?



ASIDE FROM SAYING THE WRONG ONE WHILE LOOKING AT THIS LIST?

EVERYTHING'S DESCRIPTIVE! IN UNDOUBTEDLY INCORRECT LATIN, BUT...

DUH DUH



OH HEY! A TEXT FROM SUSAN!



THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A "YAY SUSAN'S COMING TO THE PARTY" FACE.

SHE MIGHT BE



WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

YOU'VE MET DIANE, RIGHT?



INCREDIBLY CONFUSING SUSAN DOPPELGANGER? YEAH, BUT I BARELY KNOW HER. WHY?

SUSAN'S ASKING IF SHE CAN BRING HER.



Soon .

SUSAN SAYS DIANE KNOWS A LOT ALREADY, AND THAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY FAMILY (WITHOUT SPECIFYING HOW), SO...

IT SEEMS LIKE MAYBE WE SHOULD LET HER POSSIBLY?

OH! DIANE! POTENTIAL BUFFY, AND SUSAN'S MAYBE-SISTER?

I GUESS SHE COULD GET BUFF IF SHE WORKED AT IT, BUT...



BETWEEN WHAT SUSAN MIGHT HAVE TOLD HER, THE TIME WE'VE SPENT WITH HER, AND DIANE ACTUALLY BEING SOME SORT OF SUPER GENIUS DETECTIVE, SHE PROBABLY DOES KNOW A LOT ABOUT US, YES.

WHOOSH

INCLUDING THAT THE THREE-TAILED FURRY GIRL WHO SHOWED UP AT NEW YEARS WAS ME?

THREE TAILS?

PROBABLY IT'S NOT LIKE YOU DISGUISED YOUR VOICE OR ANYTHING

SCORE! YES! TEDD, SAY YES! YES YES YES!

BOING BOING BOING

UM, WELL, I WANT EVERYONE'S OPINIONS BEFORE I

WHOOSH

YOU GUYS ARE COOL WITH HER BEING HERE, RIGHT?

UH...

I GUESS...?



I DON'T KNOW DIANE, AND THE IDEA OF A "DOPPELSUSAN" IS INTIMIDATING. BUT I'M NOT GOING TO TELL SUSAN NO BECAUSE OF THAT

I'M STILL WEIRDED OUT BY DIANE'S SIMILARITIES TO SUSAN, BUT THAT'S NOT A GOOD REASON TO SAY NO BESIDES, I WANT TO SEE SUSAN! IT'S BEEN WEEKS!



CHANGE?

YEAH, UH...
DIFFERENT OUTFIT,
AND JH...



YOU'RE PERFECT JUST AS YOU ARE

IF IT HELPS I'LL
TRANSFORM, TOO.

THAT'S, UM... ERHEM! I'LL
JUST TEXT SUSAN. I WON'T
BE CHANGING AFTER ALL.

YOU
SURE?

YES, TOTALLY SURE. THANK
YOU I'LL JUST... UM...

THERE'S A CAKE I
SHOULD MAKE SURE
IT'S STILL THERE

BECAUSE,
UM... BEARS?



SHE'S NERVOUS
ABOUT BEING A
GIRL AROUND
SOMEONE NEW

YEAH

I SHOULD'VE
REALIZED
SHE'D BE ...

YOU'RE NOT
PSYCHIC, AND YOU'RE
USED TO PEOPLE
BEING FINE WITH IT

THANK YOU FOR
HELPING TEDD. BUT
I CLEARLY NEED
TO STUDY MORE
PSYCHOLOGY!

SO SHE'S
NERVOUS
ABOUT DIANE.
BUT I'M
OKAY?

WELL, AH. SHE
KNOWS HOW
WE MET, SO...

OH! SO SHE
KNOWS I LIKE
MEN TURNING INTO
WOMEN AND I
JUST DON'T HAVE
A FILTER DO I.

SO
DO I.

AS DO I,
AND I HAVE
WAYS OF
MAKING IT
HAPPEN!

I PREFER
WOMEN
BECOMING
MEN, BUT
SURE

LIKewise, THOUGH
I ONLY LIKE BEING
FEMALE TO TEASE
STRAIGHT MEN.

MY PEOPLE...!

WHICH DOESN'T SOUND
NOBLE, BUT IT IS.

SO WHAT'S THE OCCASION FOR THIS PARTY? JUST A "SOMEONE'S GOT THE HOUSE FREE LET'S GO NUTS WITH BOOZE AND MAGIC" THING?

EXCUSE!

MAGIC!

NOTHING
COULD GO
WRONG!

FIRST OF ALL,
I DOUBT THERE'LL
BE ALCOHOL.

OF COURSE
THERE WON'T

SECONDLY, NO.
IT'S ABOUT ASHLEY
GETTING TO KNOW
PEOPLE SHE CAN TALK
TO ABOUT MAGIC

WHILE WE WERE... AT THE MALL, ELLIOT, ELLEN
AND ASHLEY WERE KIDNAPPED BY A VAMPIRE AND
AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE VERSION OF ELLIOT.

WHAT

I DON'T KNOW
ALL THE DETAILS. HE
SUMMARIZED IT BRIEFLY
AT SCHOOL, BUT I
HAVEN'T BEEN SEEING
ANYONE OUTSIDE OF
SCHOOL. SO...

THAT SEEMS
LIKE A THING YOU
MAKE AN EXTRA
EFFORT TO FIND
OUT MORE
ABOUT... ?!

EVERYONE WAS OKAY, ELLIOT
WAS GIVING ME MY SPACE, AND
I GAVE HIM HIS. IF HE WANTED
TO TALK ABOUT IT MORE, I
WOULD HAVE LISTENED.

WHICH I TOLD HIM I
WOULD. BY THE WAY

OKAY BUT...

YOU BASICALLY KNOW
WHAT HAPPENED, RIGHT?

I WANT TO SAY "YES", BUT IF NOT
FOR SPACE GIVING I WOULD HAVE HAD
ABOUT TEN THOUSAND QUESTIONS.

SO. UM.. HOW
DO YOU LIKE EVERY-
ONE SO FAR?

I THINK I'M
IN LOVE WITH
GRACE

WHAT
NOT IN A
ROMANTIC
WAY!
FRIENDSHIP
LOVE!

LIKE, SHE'S SO NICE AND COOL
AND SMART AND I JUST WANT TO
HAVE A PAJAMA SLEEPOVER WITH
HER AND BRUSH HER HAIR...!

ARE YOU
SURE THIS IS
PLATONIC?

AT THE RISK OF
GIVING MYSELF A
LABEL, I'M PRETTY
SURE I'M HETERO-
ROMANTIC.

I'M NOT
INTERESTED
IN ACTUALLY
DATING
WOMEN.

PROBABLY
I THINK.

UH-UH. BUT DATING A
MAN WHO'S SOMETIMES
A WOMAN?

I MIGHT LIKE
THAT IDEA. YES.

EVERYONE ELSE SEEM
PRETTY COOL, TOO

THOUGH I'M
PRETTY SURE
NANASE'S BEEN
HITTING ON ME.

LIKE, DEFINITELY
HITTING ON YOU,
OR JUST BEING
OVERLY FRIENDLY?

PROBABLY THE SECOND ONE EXCEPT SHE
DID ASK IF I WANTED TO HOLD HER WHILE SHE
WAS A FAIRY DOLL IN A SKIMPY OUTFIT...?

HER FAIRY DOLL
WAS IN A SKIMPY
OUTFIT?

ELLIOT

I'M JUST SAYING I DIDN'T KNOW
SHE COULD DO THAT IT'S USUALLY
LIKE, THIS ONE PIECE PAJAMA THING.

ANYWAY I THINK SHE'S
JUST TRYING TOO HARD
TO BE FRIENDLY, AND...
MAYBE TO IMPRESS YOU?

I DON'T THINK
SHE'S USED TO
PUTTING EFFORT
INTO EITHER. SHE
USUALLY SUCCEEDS
AT BOTH JUST BY
BEING HERSELF

THOUGH, FOR THE RECORD
IF YOU EVER WANT TO HOLD
A FAIRY IN SKIMPY CLOTHING,
IT WON'T BOTHER ME

LIKewise!
ESPECIALLY IF
I CAN BE THE
FAIRY

AWKWARDNESS FROM TRYING
TOO HARD I'VE BEEN THERE

SERIOUSLY,
IS THAT AN
OPTION???

ASHLEY MUST BE MORE
TIMID THAN I THOUGHT.

BUT JUST WAIT UNTIL
SHE SEES MY HAIR MAGIC
IN ACTION! AND FOX!
THAT'LL IMPRESS HER!

NOT THAT IT WOULD BE
THE END OF THE WORLD
IF SHE DIDN'T THINK I
WAS COOL, RIGHT?

AND MAYBE GRACE WAS
RIGHT ABOUT THAT OUTFIT
BEING MORE SEXY THAN
COOL, BUT I STILL SAY
THERE'S OVERLAP THERE

I SHOULD
FLOAT
AROUND
THE PARTY
INSTEAD OF
WALKING

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

I'M FINE. THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT

AFTER ALL, I'VE BEEN A GIRL AROUND MY FRIENDS, WHOSE OPINIONS I CARE ABOUT MOST

I'VE EVEN STARTED BRAZENLY BEING A GIRL WHENEVER IT FEELS RIGHT EVEN IF MY DAD'S AROUND.

I'VE ALSO BEEN A GIRL IN PUBLIC! EVEN IF IT WAS ONLY INTENTIONAL WHEN I KNEW NO ONE WOULD NOTICE, OR SAY ANYTHING IF THEY DID. THAT'S NOT NOTHING!

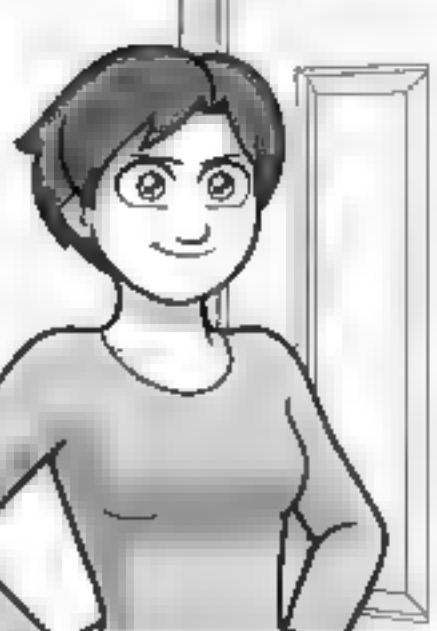
I'VE FACED AN INTERDIMENSIONAL SPACE WHALE

...AND I'VE EVEN BEEN A GIRL WHILE SPEAKING TO THE WILL OF MAGIC ITSELF AND HELPING SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE ENTIRE WORLD!

DANE IS JUST ONE GIRL I'VE NEVER MET WHO'S GOING TO BE IN MY HOME AND MIGHT JUDGE ME FOR BEING WHO I AM!

THAT'S STILL SCARY, ISN'T IT

LIKE A DRAGON WITH A CHAINSAW



DOORBELL



YOU CAN DO THIS, TEDDI! YOU ARE A STRONG INDEPENDENT WOMAN WHO NEEDS NO DIANE!

I KNOW THAT MAKES NO SENSE BUT YOU GET THE SENTIMENT!

R-RIGHT



WELCOME! HELLO!



UH, HI, GRACE, YOU
KNOW DIANE DIANE THIS
IS TEDD. TEDD, DIANE.



HELLO. I LIKE
YOUR HAIR.



OH! UH
THANK YOU!
I LIKE YOURS,
TOO

THANK
YOU

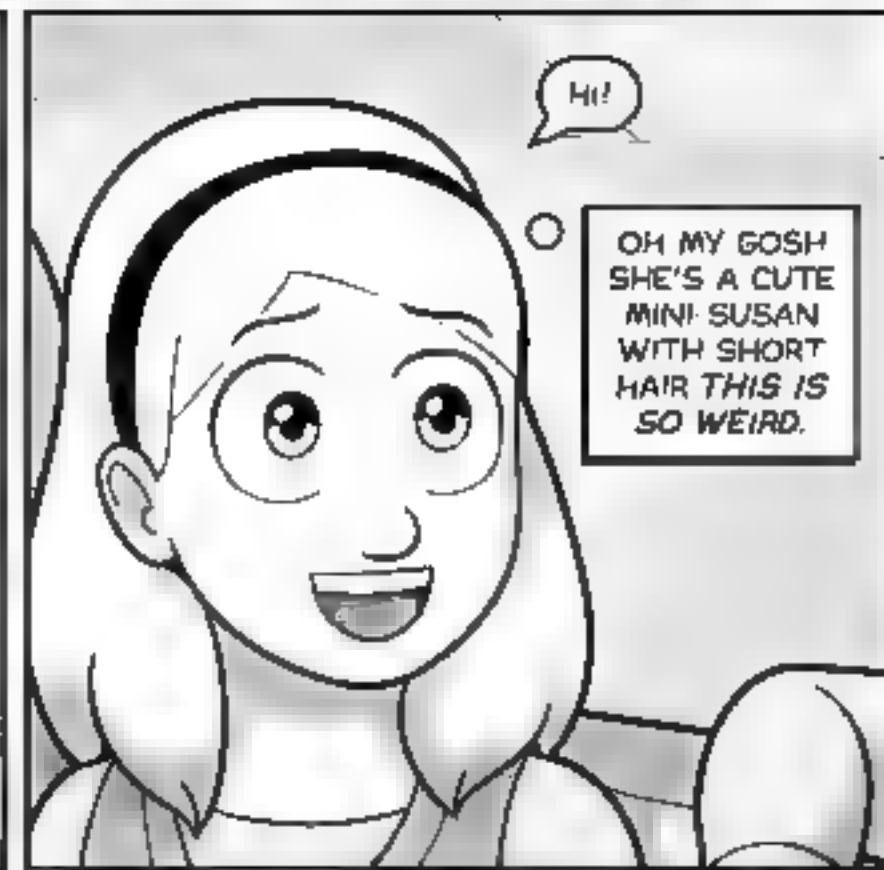




AND YOU'RE
DEFINITELY GOING TO
GO WITH THE LATTER

I'M BEHIND YOU
TWELVE THOUSAND
PERCENT!

I HAVE NAMED
HIM TYRONE. AND HE
IS DEAD TO ME



AT THE RISK OF
SOUNDING SELF-
IMPORTANT...

...I'M SURE YOU'RE
ALL EAGER TO KNOW
HOW DIANE AND I
ARE RELATED AND
HOW WE MANAGED
TO ASCERTAIN OUR
SHARED ANCESTRY

TELL US TELL US TELL US...

THOUGH I AM
CERTAIN I WILL
WANT TO SHARE ALL
OF THIS WITH YOU
AT SOME POINT.

I WOULD
PREFER NOT
TO DISCUSS IT
UNTIL I AM
READY TO.

SAME HERE
BY WHICH, I
MEAN I'LL TALK
ABOUT IT WHEN
SHE DOES.

NOT THAT
I'M EAGER
TO, MIND
YOU

TOTALLY!

SURE!

CERTAINLY

YEP! OKAY

YOU GOT IT

WE'RE BACK!
SO HOW ARE YOU
TWO RELATED?

I SHOULD HAVE
WAITED UNTIL EVERYONE
WAS DOWN HERE.

ANYWAY SORRY, ABOUT CRASHING I KNOW YOU'RE DOING A SORT OF "TALK FREELY ABOUT MAGIC" THING AND I DON'T HAVE ANY OF MY OWN. BUT

I AM A TRAINED CHEERLEADER, AND I CAN TOTALLY CHEER ON WHATEVER COOL STUFF YOU GUYS CAN DO!

SHE'S A CHEERLEADER, TOO?!

THOUGH I'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT JUMPING IN HERE...

DO YOU WANT TO CAST SOME MAGIC?

UM... YEAH?

CATCH!

IS THIS... A DRUMSTICK?

IT WAS, ONCE. NOW IT IS MORE

I AM A WAND MAKER.

ALSO, AS IT TURNS OUT, A BIT NEAR-SIGHTED



I'M BEING TROLLED, AREN'T I.

SOMEONE HERE IS A DRUMMER, AND THIS IS JUST A DRUMSTICK

SORRY ABOUT THAT I WAS ACTUALLY TRYING TO GET EVERYONE TO FOCUS ON THE WAND INSTEAD OF MY GLASSES, BUT...

A-ANYWAY, THAT IS A MAGIC WAND.

OH, SO... YOU CAN TURN STICKS INTO MAGIC WANDS, AND YOU USE DRUMSTICKS BECAUSE THEY'RE RELATIVELY STURDY AND CHEAP?

BASICALLY A LUCKY BONUS TO USING DRUMSTICKS I DIDN'T THINK OF UNTIL I GOT THEM, THOUGH, IS THE TIP

WHY DOES THE TIP MATTER?

IT DOESN'T REALLY BUT IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY, AND KEEPING EVERYONE COMFORTABLE, THIS WAND'S SPELLS ARE VERY CLOSE RANGE

WHETHER CASTING A SPELL ON YOURSELF OR SOMEONE ELSE, THAT TIP HAS TO BE TOUCHING WHOEVER'S BEING ENCHANTED

YOU ALSO HAVE TO SAY A CODE PHRASE IN INTERNET-TRANSLATED LATIN WHILE KEEPING THAT CONTACT, AND PEOPLE WHO KNOW A SPELL IS COMING GET A BOOST TO SPELL RESISTANCE, SO YEAH.

VERY DIFFICULT TO ENCHANT ANYONE BY ACCIDENT, OR AGAINST SOMEONE'S WISHES

SO THERE'S NOT MUCH CHANCE OF ANYONE ACCIDENTALLY TRANSFORMING ME IN SOME EMBARRASSING WAY?

ALMOST NO CHANCE!

GOOD!

I ASSUME ANYTHING THIS DOES IS EASY TO UNDO, RIGHT?

OH, RIGHT. YOU AND ASHLEY AREN'T USED TO THIS. YES EVERYTHING WITH THAT WAND IS SET TO LAST SIX HOURS, AND ONE OF THE SPELLS IS SIMPLY AN "UNDO SPELL", AND...

SURE JUSTIN, HELP ME WITH THIS THING? I DON'T WANT SEVEN YEARS BAD LUCK.

WELL, HECK, LET'S NOT JUST TALK. LET'S GO OVER THERE AND. ELLIOT CAN YOU GET THE DOOR?

TA-DAH!

AH, A BIGGER MIRROR

YEAH, MY DAD HAD IT STORED IN THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BASEMENT HE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT UNTIL WE DID SOME CLEANING

HE RECOMMENDED I WAIT FOR BURLY MEN TO BE AROUND BEFORE MOVING IT IN HERE.

I DEFINITELY COULD'VE MOVED IT MYSELF I COULD'VE BEEN A BURLY MAN AND EVERYTHING.

I FIGURED WE'D START WITH A HAIR COLOR SPELL. ARE YOU COMFORTABLE CASTING A SPELL ON YOURSELF RIGHT AWAY, OR WOULD YOU RATHER ENCHANT A VOLUNTEER?

HMM, I THINK I WOULD PREFER A GUINEA PIG...

I VOLUNTEER AS PIGGY!

OKAY SO ALL YOU HAVE TO DO
IS REST THE WAND ON ASHLEY.
FOCUS ON A HAIR COLOR.

...AND SAY
"CAPILLUM
MUTO"!

THIS ISN'T A
"WINGARDIUM
LEVI-OH-SA"
SITUATION,
IS IT?

LIKE SHE'S NOT GOING
TO GO BALD IF I MESS
UP THE PRONUNCIATION
RIGHT?



DID DANE JUST
REFERENCE HARRY
POTTER?!

T'S A POPULAR SERIES

NO NO NO. WORST
SHOULD BE THE SPELL
DOESN'T HAPPEN



CAPILLUM
MUTO!

IT WORKED!

LOOK! LOOK
LOOK LOOK!





Next story comic Monday, November 25th

Details on why in commentary Friday EGSNP as normal



SARAH.
ELLIOT'S EX-
GIRLFRIEND!

SHE SEEKS
REALLY NICE,
BUT WHAT
IF...

SO, ELLIOT'S
NEW PLAYTHING,
EH? CUTE

LET'S MAKE
YOU CUTER.

DOLLYSIZZUS!

AH-HA
HAHAHA!
HELLO,
DOLLY!
HAHA!

OH

ZOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Wheee!

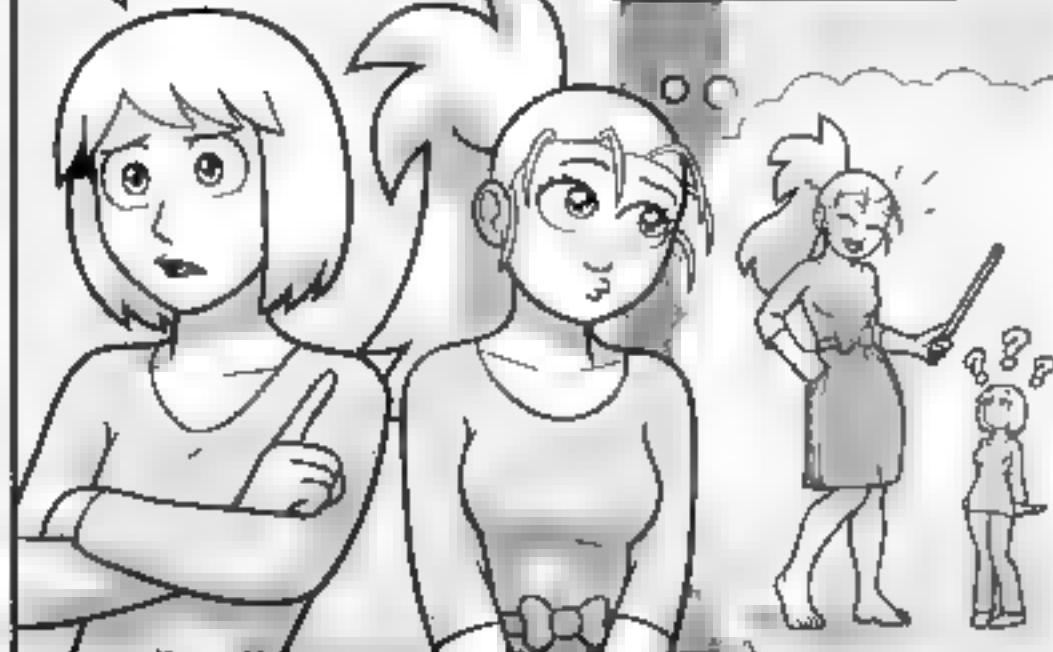
THERE IS A SHRINK SPELL!

AMPLIO DECRESCO!



SHRINKING SEEMS LIKE AN INCREDIBLY BAD IDEA THAT NO ONE WOULD RATIONALLY WANT

UNLESS WE'RE TALKING, LIKE, A COUPLE PERCENT SMALLER, OR A HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT?



IT CHANGES SIZE ALL AROUND, BUT ONLY BETWEEN HALF AND DOUBLE-SIZED.

I'M AFRAID TO ASK HOW YOU TESTED THAT

WELL, AH, I HAVEN'T...

...BUT MY DAD'S TOLD ME ABOUT SIZE CHANGE MAGIC...

AND SHRINKING WITH MAGIC LIKE THIS INCREASES DURABILITY, SO IT'S SAFER THAN YOU'D THINK!

ADRENALINE

I'M GOING TO BE SHRUNK BY MY BOYFRIEND'S EX-GIRLFRIEND! YES! BUT WHAT ABOUT CLOTHES? SHE'D WARN ABOUT SHRINKING OUT OF THEM. BUT MAYBE THEY'RE USED TO EVERYONE KNOWING? I SHOULD ASK JUST IN CASE THAT'S THE



SOUNDS GOOD! GO AHEAD! AMPLIO DECRESCO!



ASHLEY SEEMS EXCITED ABOUT SIZE CHANGE MAGIC, SO WHY DIDN'T SHE LIKE MY FAIRY DOLL MORE?

WAIT! THAT'S IT!

THE FAIRY DOLL WAS TOO COOL! SHE JUST DON'T WANT TO BE WEIRD ABOUT IT!

MYSTERY SOLVED!

ASHLEY ARE YOU OKAY?

TEDD. I THOUGHT YOU TESTED EVERY SPELL THE WAND CAN CAST!

UH.
YEAH.
UH.

I DID! BUT... YOU IMAGINE A SIZE WHEN CASTING THE SPELL, AND I HAD EXPECTATIONS.

I'M SORRY! I MUST HAVE CONTAMINATED MY RESULTS WITH BIAS! I DID BAD SCIENCE!

SO... WAIT. SARAH, HOW SMALL DID YOU IMAGINE ASHLEY SHRINKING?

I THOUGHT SHE'D STOP AT THE LIMIT, SO I JUST IMAGINED HER DOLL-SIZED.

SMALLER THAN THIS... WHICH MEANS THIS IS THE ACTUAL LIMIT! TWELVE POINT FIVE PERCENT SIZE, NOT FIFTY-PERCENT--

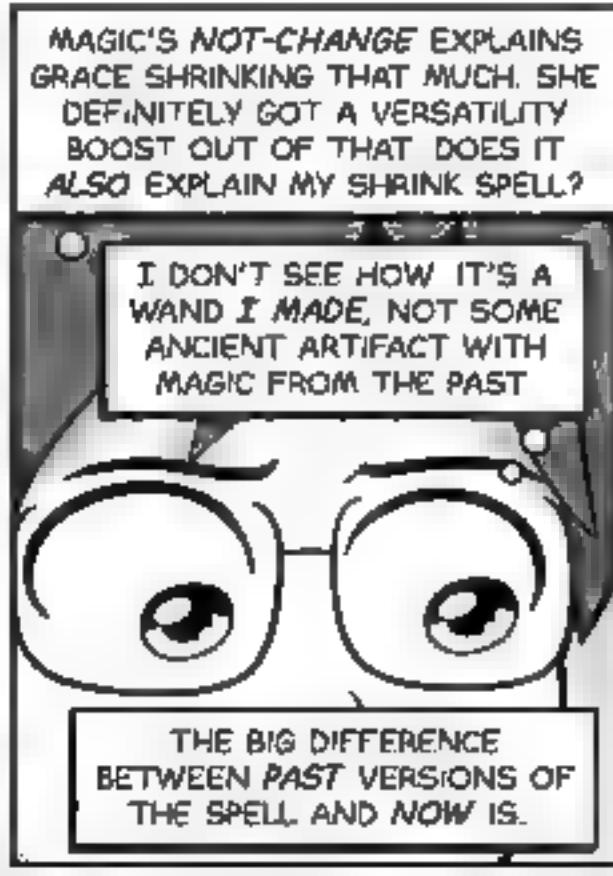
BACK OFF!

Y'ALL ARE HUGE AND SCARY AND ASHLEY IS VERY SMALL!

LET'S JUST US LITTLE LADIES GO TO THE SOFA FOR A MINUTE OKAY? CATCH A BREATH?

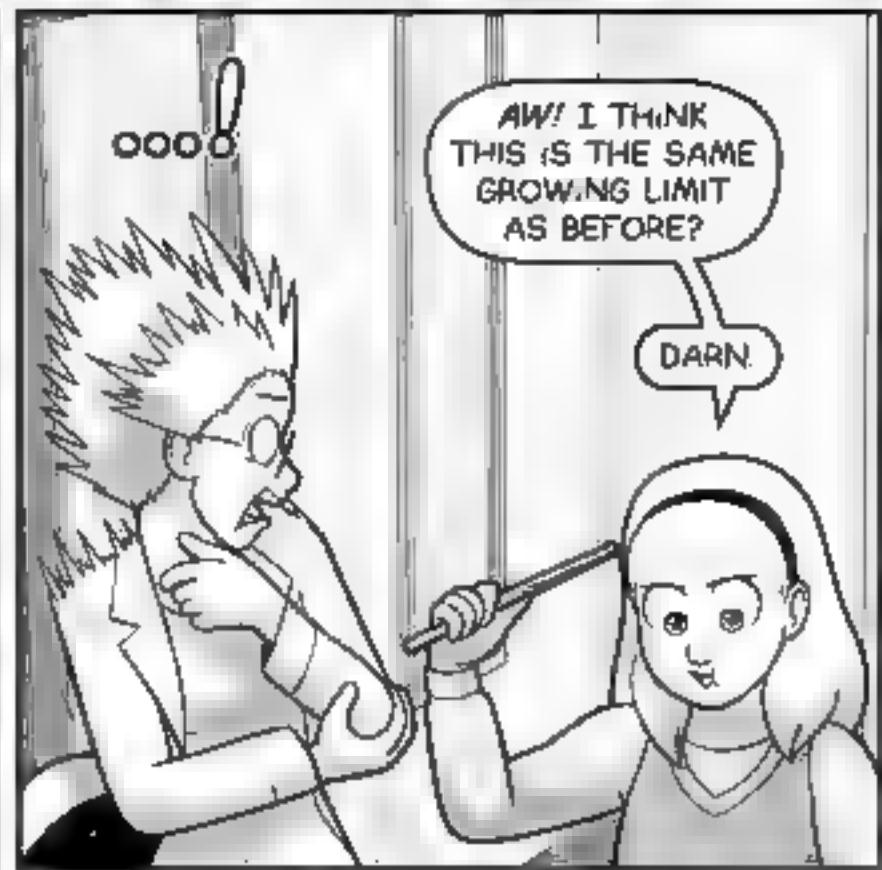
YES PLEASE THANK YOU

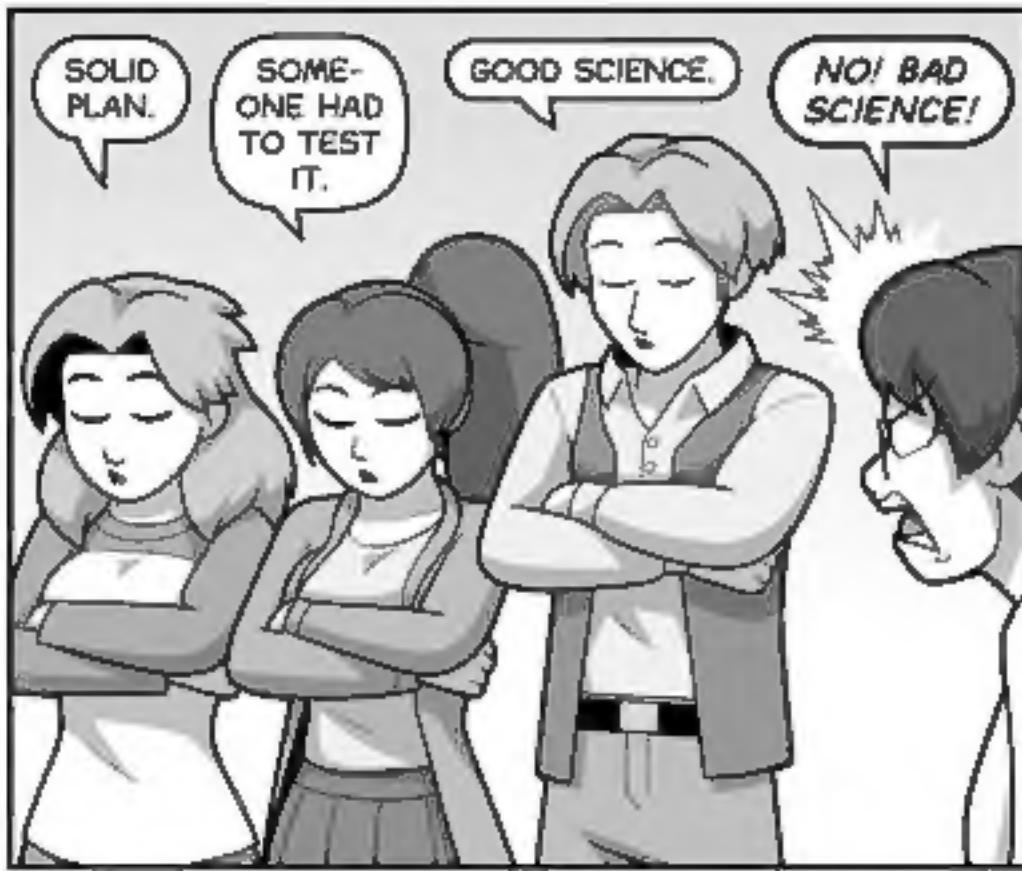
NO PROBLEM. A SQUIRREL KNOWS THAT FEELING













© 2019 Dan Shive - egocomics.com

Next Story and EGSNP comics Monday, December 30

I apologize for the delay, but Santa Ellen insisted I take a break.

Happy Holidays!

I HOPE THIS
ISN'T WEIRD,
BUT YOU
LOOK REALLY
HUGGABLE AT
THAT SIZE.
WOULD YOU
MIND IF I...?

GO AHEAD!



YES YES, THE PHENOMENON
OF ELEVATED HUGGABLENESS
AT INCREASED OR REDUCED
SIZES HAS BEEN OBSERVED...

...BUT I REALLY
NEED TO MEASURE
SARAH'S HEIGHT.



SHE'S
PRETTY TALL.
WANT ME TO
DO IT?

YES,
PLEASE.

OR, SOMEONE
COULD GROW YOU.

THEN WE'D HAVE
MORE DATA ON
THAT SPELL AND
HUGGABLENESS!

DIANE, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED,
WE HAVEN'T HUNG OUT MUCH,
BUT THIS HAS TO BE SAID:

I LIKE THE WAY YOU PARTY.



AMPLIO DECRESCO!

